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A STORY OF SOCIETY



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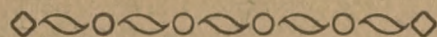
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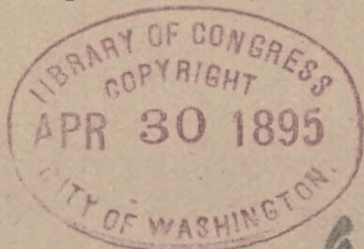
BY

CHARLES STOKES WAYNE

*Author of "Anthony Kent," "Mrs. Lord's
Moonstone," etc.*

"Great families of yesterday we show,
And lords whose parents were, the Lord knows who."

Defoe.



PHILADELPHIA

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THE VORTEX COMPANY

10 South 18th Street

(1893)

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CHARLES STOKES WAYNE

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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A NOVEL

“A story which enchains the attention and leaves its mark. While the subject is unwholesome, and the atmosphere of the pages more or less morbid, the tale carries a trenchant moral, and all the more so because it is not insisted upon. The author lets the life of the leading character—an attractive, pleasure-loving, responsibility-evading man of the world—speak for itself in ultimate disillusion and final defeat.”—*Brooklyn Standard Union*.

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“The story is a wonderfully clever one, and a finely fanciful idea is treated with much skill and with real imaginative power.”—*Philadelphia Evening Telegraph*.

to

L. D. W.

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The Lady and Her Tree

CHAPTER I

A MATTER OF NEIGHBORHOOD

MRS. YORKE was uncomfortably conscious of having committed an error. The stout, middle-aged gentleman on her right, in an effort to make conversation, had enquired concerning her impressions of Philadelphia, and she had replied, quite unsuspectingly, that she thought North Broad street "just heavenly!" Thereupon the silence of the catacombs had suddenly enwrapped the shocked and astonished company, each member of which, with the single exception of her own husband, sat gazing at her curiously, as though she were some hideous Chonek from far off Patagonia, rather than a very comely young matron from the neighboring isle of Manhattan. Even Mrs. Pemberton's phlegmatic butler stopped for an instant in his round of plate-changing, and

an ill-disguised sneer flitted across his clean-shaven features.

"I dare say!" broke in her hostess, just as the stillness was becoming embarrassing; "I have heard that it is an admirable place for bicycle practice," and she glanced invitingly at a fair-haired, snub-nosed, girl of muscular appearance, midway down the table, who, taking the hint, added with a laugh:

"O, dear, yes! I actually learned to ride up there last Spring. Jorkins would take up my wheel; and I would go up in the brougham. It was so entirely secluded, you know. I didn't mind falls a bit."

"We were thinking," Mr. Newland Yorke remarked, from his place on the right of Mrs. Pemberton, and utterly unmindful of the chill that the mere mention of the thoroughfare had provoked, "of taking a house, there; but if it is as secluded as Miss Bassett says—"

"My dear fellow," interrupted Pemberton, from the foot of the table, "you wouldn't see a soul there from year's end to year's end. It is out of the world—out of the world." And then, by way of apology, he turned to Mrs. Brokaw, on his left, and explained that Mr. and Mrs. Yorke,

being absolute strangers in the city, could not be expected to understand arbitrary distinctions as to neighborhoods and streets.

Mrs. Yorke was not a little perplexed, and her husband, had he stopped for a moment to consider the subject, would have been not less so. She had feared at first that North Broad street was disreputable; the home of the half world, and the resort of the socially depraved. But the remarks of Miss Bassett had scattered these suspicions, and she was vainly trying to understand how it was possible that there should be such solitude where she had seen so many fine residences.

“Mr. Brokaw,” she said at last, addressing the stout, middle-aged gentleman on her right, whose question had indirectly involved her in her present plight, “would you mind telling me the objection to North Broad street?”

Mr. Brokaw, whose wife enjoyed the distinction of being what is known as a society leader, stopped with his fork poised midway between his plate and his lips.

“I should be delighted, my dear Mrs. Yorke,” he replied, with some dignity, “but the fact is I know nothing whatever about the street. I have never been through it, save once last spring when

I rode atop a coach from this city to New York."

"But why?" she pursued, still more puzzled by this ignorance of what seemed to her by far the most imposing street in all the city; "you are a Philadelphian, are you not? You have lived here for some years at all events, I suppose."

"I have lived here all my life," he answered, proudly, "as did my ancestors before me. My grandfather was a member of the City Council in the days when it was an honor to hold a seat in that body; and my great grandfather was on the staff of General Washington. I have on the walls of my library a family tree by which I can trace my ancestry back seventeen generations."

Mrs. Yorke failed to suppress altogether the amusement that this little speech caused her.

"And you don't know anything about North Broad street?" she asked.

Mr. Brokaw, who detected the touch of raillery in her words, was visibly annoyed. His face crimsoned and he winked nervously several times in rapid succession.

"North Broad street," he said at last, a little tartly, "is impossible. Anything that is north is impossible."

"But why impossible?"

He paused for a moment while the butler refilled his glass. Then he turned to her, and the sincerity that was in her eyes softened his resentment.

“I will tell you,” he said: “*nouveau riche*, plebeian, parvenu, *bourgeois*, philistine.”

He spoke with some feeling, emphasizing each word with a tap of his fork-handle upon the damask table cloth.

“How stupid of me not to have guessed!” exclaimed Mrs. Yorke, in a tone of self-abasement. “How ignorant of me not to have known! If I am not blushing it is because I have been taught that to confess an error is admirable. It is an avowal that I am wiser to-day than I was yesterday. O, how glad I am, Mr. Brokaw, that you have set me right! Only to think, we might actually have taken a house there, and have gone there to live.”

“Pardon me, but you are mistaken,” returned Mr. Brokaw, gallantly, “you could never have gone there to live. I am sure of it. Your instinct would have warned you against a step so suicidal.”

The dinner had been a somewhat hazardous experiment on the part of Mrs. Pemberton, and

she was still anxiously nervous concerning it. Mr. and Mrs. Yorke were both utter strangers. Mr. Yorke had recently become associated with Mr. Pemberton in business, and a week prior to this gathering had brought his wife to Philadelphia for the winter. Mr. Pemberton had suggested that a dinner in honor of the Yorke advent would be appropriate, and Mrs. Pemberton, after a little demur, had acquiesced. At her husband's request, she had called upon Mrs. Yorke, at the Stratford, and despite a preconceived antipathy, had been charmed by the newcomer's personality.

Mrs. Pemberton was a tall woman with strong features. People had been wont to tell her that she resembled the Empress Eugénie, and she had not been slow to accept the suggestion and to add, as far as possible, to a natural similarity of features by copying from photographs the favorite coiffures of Her Imperial Highness. Mrs. Yorke, she observed, was quite as tall as herself, but less matronly, being young enough, so far as appearance went, to be her own daughter. There was something about the perfect oval of her face, too, and the plain, yet not severe, way in which she dressed her abundant light brown hair that

won Mrs. Pemberton's approbation, and the easy grace of her movements and manner was by no means lost upon the visitor. In the course of conversation, Mrs. Pemberton learned that Mrs. Yorke knew many of the best people in New York society. Her husband was related in some way to the Schermerhorns, and among her most intimate friends were the Astorbilts, the Vandastors, the Manhattans, and the Gradley-Spartans.

Relying upon these facts, Mrs. Pemberton had ventured to invite a favored few of her own particular set to meet Mr. and Mrs. Newland Yorke. She was, however, by no means unaware of the hesitancy that exists among the social elect of the Quaker city to take up strangers, and when six out of the seven whom she had bidden sent acceptances, she was as much surprised as pleased. The young gentleman that forwarded his regrets explained that he was in training for foot ball as a "sub" on the Varsity team, and at the last moment Mrs. Pemberton replaced him with young Montie Willington, a youthful widower who belonged to the Four in Hand club, and wrote newspaper articles for fun. That the Brokaws had accepted was, she thought, a subject for special gratulation. Mrs. Brokaw managed the

Tuesday Dances, which, next to the Assemblies, are recognized as the most fashionable functions of the season, and should the Yorkes succeed in making a favorable impression in that direction, their social success, Mrs. Pemberton told herself, would be at once established. The other guests included Dr. Dick Turpin, who endeavored to maintain the reputation he had achieved as being the "fastest" man in the distinguished Turpin family; Miss Logan, a somewhat antiquated spinster, who was regarded as a walking social encyclopedia; Miss Bassett, who not only rode a bicycle, but rode to hounds with the best men of the Radnor Hunt; and Mrs. Martineau, another New York importation, whose beauty had won her social recognition. Young Tad Pemberton, the son of the household, sat opposite to Miss Bassett, and discussed with her the advantages to be derived by the women members of the Centaur Bicycle club adopting a bloomer uniform, much to the annoyance of his mother, who, in spite of her prominence in society, still held some rather conservative ideas as to topics suitable for debate in mixed company.

The North Broad street episode had distressed her beyond measure. She had observed Mr.

Brokaw's evident annoyance, and had deplored what she regarded as a lack of tact on the part of Mrs. Yorke in pressing her enquiries in the face of the gentleman's palpable disinclination to talk upon the subject. Moreover, the dinner was not up to the average. Her cook, she realized from the expression of her husband, had failed with the ducks, and the terrapin was not of the proper savor. The heat of the room and the odor of the roses made her head ache; and, as if to add the last straw to the load of her woes, one of the pink shades on the candelabra suddenly burst into flame and toppled off, burning great holes in a lace table ornament that she had purchased at a bargain at the Chicago Fair, and that she knew she could not replace for four times the money.

Dr. Turpin was asking Mrs. Brokaw what kind of a time she had had at Saranac Lake, and Mr. Brokaw was telling Mrs. Yorke about the wonderfully dry summer at Richfield Springs. Mr. Yorke had entered into a conversation across the table with Mrs. Martineau on the relative pleasures of life in Philadelphia and New York, interlarded, of course, with the usual covert slings at the Quaker city's somnolence; and Miss Logan

had just enquired of Montie Willington whether he meant to enter for the four-in-hand driving contest at the New York horse show, when Mrs. Pemberton, catching her husband's eye, gave the pre-arranged signal, and the company rose.

Once the ladies were gone, the men resumed their places in somewhat easier attitudes, drawing out their chairs, crossing their legs, and lighting cigarettes and cigars. Pemberton, *père* suggested a specially imported cognac that he had run across abroad, and for a few minutes commendatory terms floated to him from the lips of the would-be *connaisseurs*. Then Yorke and his host and Brokaw and the doctor formed themselves into a little group, dilating upon the merits and demerits of several recognized brands of brandy; while young Pemberton and Willington, with heads close together, sang to each other praises of Mrs. Yorke's beauty, and with contrasting irreverence discussed in whispers the possible pregnability of her virtue. Young Pemberton had noticed particularly, he said, that her under lip was temptingly full, which, he argued, betrayed a passionate disposition. Mr. Willington admitted that he had not especially observed that feature, but that her eyes, and the way she used

them, indicated to him that she was not averse to a quiet flirtation. He had, moreover, detected a tendency on her part to sudden flushes of color, which, in his varied experience, had always gone hand in hand with a warm temperament. The combination he regarded as somewhat promising, but he was a little disappointed to have discovered that she was anything but a lover of wine, her glass having not once been drained during dinner. On the whole, he feared that she was one of those women, the road to whose boudoir lay only through the church door.

When, at length, these youthful solons repaired to the drawing-room, Willington lost no time in finding a place by Mrs. Yorke's side. He was a young man, but his life had been so rapid that into the twenty-three years of its span he had crowded considerably more in the way of variety than frequently makes up the career of men twice his age. He had been married and left a widower before he cast his first vote ; he had tumbled into an alliance with a chorus girl that it had cost his father several thousand dollars to extricate him from ; and during the past year he had, according to common rumor, broken the hearts of at least three society débutantes. He was a

handsome, fair, beardless youth ; tall, lithe-limbed and broad shouldered ; and Mrs. Yorke, like all women that came into contact with him, was more or less attracted by his pleasing personality.

“ I have been trying to think, Mr. Willington,” she said, as he took a place beside her, “ where I have met you. Your face and your name are both very familiar.”

“ I’m sure we have met somewhere,” acquiesced the young man ; though, in point of fact, he had not the slightest recollection of ever having seen Mrs. Yorke until that evening. “ Were you at the Clarence-Prescotts’ dance during Horse-Show week last autumn in New York ? ”

“ No,” thoughtfully, “ O, no. It was not so recently as that. It seems it was long ago ; when I was a child. I was a mere baby when I left Philadelphia, but——”

“ Left Philadelphia ! ” repeated Willington in surprise. “ Do you mean you were born here ? ”

Mrs. Yorke laughed at his astonishment.

“ Of course. Is there anything so wonderful in that ? ”

“ O, no ; certainly not ; but—well, you know, we had all been told you were from New York—a

New York girl, don't you see. Where did you live here?"

"I haven't the slightest idea. I was not over seven when we moved away. Now I think of it, though, it seems to me it was a street with a double name."

"And your name was——?"

"Lawrence—Katharine Lawrence."

Mr. Willington indulged in a long, low, half-smothered whistle.

"Well, well!" he exclaimed delightedly, "now I know it. Why, we used to live next door to each other."

"Where?"

"Here."

"But on what street? Tell me the name of the street; that will bring it all back to me."

Mrs. Martineau had seated herself at the piano, and was turning over some music.

"Sh!" warned Willington, "wait a second."

Presently she found the composition of which she was in search, and struck a resounding chord.

"I must whisper it to you," the young man continued, "and don't you, for the world, repeat it."

Mrs. Yorke stared at him in amazement.

"Spring Garden street," he whispered, so low that she scarcely heard him.

"Yes, yes," she cried excitedly ; "that is it—Spr——"

Willington coughed loudly, and the name was drowned in the cough.

"I told you not to repeat it," he said, chidingly, as though she had committed a crime. "For heaven's sake, don't ever let it be known that we were born there. It would mean our social ruin."

"But as I remember it," added Mrs. Yorke, a little vexed at his tone, "it was a very beautiful street, with large, elegant houses, and exceedingly nice people lived there."

"O, yes, of course," replied Willington, "it was, and is, all of that."

"Then why——"

"Because, Mrs. Yorke," and he spoke very seriously, "it is like North Broad street—*it is up-town.*"

CHAPTER II

THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE

THE entry of the Yorkes into the somewhat narrow life of the Quaker city had been brought about by a combination of circumstances more or less fortuitous. For two years stocks had not gone Yorke's way. He had foolishly attempted to battle against the tide of speculation, and had ended by being thrown up, weak and helpless, upon the reef of financial disability. Mrs. Yorke had, not unnaturally, fretted under the reverses that reduced them from affluence to what seemed to her very like penury, and she was all the more difficult to mollify in that it was through no fault of hers that matters had so shaped themselves. Yorke, on the other hand, was possessed of a distinctly hopeful disposition. The misfortunes that had crowded upon him were of sufficient magnitude to have caused thoughts of self-destruction in men morally his superiors; but the fits of despondency from which he suffered at times were never of twenty-four hours' duration;

the shadows that clouded his horizon at night disappeared with the first flush of morning, and the future invariably held for him a promise of better things.

Mrs. Yorke had opposed the removal to Philadelphia, but Yorke had deemed it advisable for two reasons that he regarded as good and sufficient. In the first place, he had been tendered the vice-presidency of a manufacturing company there in which he was already, to some extent, pecuniarily interested, and with an accompanying salary which, under the circumstances, was most tempting. In the second place, it was impossible for him to live in New York as he had lived before misfortune overtook him, and his pride was such that he rebelled against making any further exhibition of his poverty before his friends than was absolutely unavoidable.

To overcome this latter objection to continuing their residence in New York, Mrs. Yorke had suggested that they should go abroad, as Americans frequently do under similar conditions; but the proposition was met with the unanswerable argument that their income was not sufficient even to rent a villa out of London, or a reasonably comfortable apartment in a good neighborhood in

Paris. In order to live at all, York declared, it was necessary that he should earn the funds to pay the bills, and he saw no way of accomplishing this more successfully than by accepting the offer of the Philadelphia corporation.

For Mrs. Yorke, the city of her birth offered no allurements. It had, indeed, since her early youth been something of a bugbear to her, and she returned to it resolved that she would dislike it. At the tender age of seven she had been thrown by her mother's second marriage into the companionship of three step brothers and two step-sisters, typical New York children with an abiding faith in the superiority of their own metropolis, and a well-grounded antipathy to everything foreign. First their patronage, and afterwards their undisguised ridicule of the city whence she came, aroused in her an antagonism that found expression in an earnest defence of the place of her nativity. The odds, however, were too heavily against her, and in time she surrendered completely, even vowing, finally, a lasting allegiance to the home of her adoption and that of her new-found kinsfolk. Her father's name had been Lawrence; but, as was very natural, she came to be known by that of her step-father,

which was Van Vrancken, and as Miss Katherine Van Vrancken, Newland Yorke wooed, won and wed her.

The marriage was regarded by her people as a most advantageous one. The Van Vranckens, while they lived well and kept up a semblance of prosperity, were really far from wealthy. Mr. Van Vrancken's business in recent years had declined, owing to the sharp competition of more progressive and energetic concerns in the same line of trade. His income was scarcely sufficient to meet current expenditures, and to meet the expenses that the wedding of his step-daughter had entailed, a mortgage on his house in Washington Place had been necessary.

Mr. Yorke, on the other hand, was at that time a young man of independent fortune, as his father had been before him. While not so active in society as some of his fellows, he was, nevertheless, received at the best houses, and was a member of half a dozen clubs. He had met Miss Van Vrancken in the Adirondacks, while visiting at one of those luxurious lounging places that, for want of a more accurately descriptive term, are known as camps. The informality of the life, where both were guests of a mutual friend,

was calculated to enhance intimacy, and at the end of a fortnight there was an understanding, that in the autumn developed into an engagement. The following spring, the cards were issued and the wedding bells chimed.

At the breakfast that followed the ceremony, Mr. Van Vrancken made a speech. In the course of his remarks he was guilty of using the unpardonably trite expression that the bride and bridegroom were admirably suited to each other, the only redeeming feature of the utterance being its absolute truth. In marriage, antitheses are generally conceded to be all desirable, and in this instance, antitheses were most noticeable. Yorke was swarthy as a Spaniard, tall as a grenadier and muscular as an Atlantean. His bride was tall, too, but fair, small-boned and slender, with the graceful outline of a Psyche, and the dimples of a Bartolozzi cherub. In disposition and temperament too, they were utterly unlike: Yorke was easy-going, credulous, reckless, while the woman that had just promised to love, honor and obey him was ambitious, energetic, quick-tempered and revengeful. These words paint their characters in broad, colorful dashes, but the man and the woman were possessed also, as are all of us, of

those minor characteristics that veil, usually, our underlying qualities, and tone them in a way that makes us not only bearable, but often genial members of society.

For two years the Yorkes traveled in foreign lands. On their return they opened a house on upper Fifth avenue, where they entertained, and, as is the rule in this world of compensation, they were entertained in return. In the summer they took a cottage at Narragansett Pier, where Mrs. Yorke's beauty was much talked about, and whence, each week, letters went forth to the newspapers describing her gowns, not omitting even her bathing costume, which was pictured in a syndicate article, published in all the great cities of the land.

Meanwhile, Yorke found much more to interest him in the financial columns of the daily prints than in these gossiping screeds of the resort correspondents. His fortune, which was invested chiefly in bonds and stocks, had shrunk several hundred thousand dollars in the space of six months. Two of the railroads in which he was most largely interested had gone into the hands of receivers, and another had stopped paying dividends and threatened also to default on its in-

terest charges. Each day a turn in the tide was hoped for, but the sweep of disaster seemed to be without end. Speculative efforts to retrieve in some part his losses resulted only in additional calamity ; and what were at first mere laughing hints to his wife, that thereafter they should be compelled to be more careful of the pennies, came eventually to be stern statements that retrenchment was a necessity. It was during this period that Yorke first tasted the cup of despondency ; but he merely sipped it. Happiness was his shadow. The remembrance of it followed him ; the hope of it went before. Each dawn brought to him new plans for the future, and over each plan hung a golden aureole. Of all these the Philadelphia proposition's crown appeared to him the brightest. In spite of Mrs. Yorke's opposition he reached out for it, and the removal to the Quaker city was an incident of its adoption.

During the first month of her sojourn in Philadelphia, Mrs. Yorke's discontent did not abate. It was early autumn, warm and enervating, and it appeared to her that the sun shone less brightly, and that the rain fell more dismally than she had ever known them to do in New York. During this time the Yorkes lived at the Stratford,

but as the expense was great and the accommodations were inadequate, Yorke suggested that Mrs. Yorke should look about for unfurnished apartments. In this direction there was very little choice. Rooms by the score were to be had on the fashionable streets, but they were usually in old-fashioned houses, large, high-ceiled and forbidding; and a restaurant being the exception, it was necessary to go out for one's meals. This was, in Mrs. Yorke's eyes, an insuperable objection, and she accordingly turned her attention to the large apartment houses, of which there were but four or five. For a day she wavered between the Bonaparte and the Salisbury, and ended by choosing the latter, because the building was the more imposing and possessed what she described as "more of a metropolitan air." The rooms she chose, however, were but five in number and as small as dovecotes. From New York, a specified portion of her stored furniture, pictures and bric-à-brac, were shipped over, and she spent a busy week in arranging and rearranging it. Having secured an effect partially satisfactory, she sent out cards for a tea, and society, as much from sheer curiosity as from any other motive, made it a point to attend.

CHAPTER III

A PERSONAL IN "THE HERALD"

ON the day of Mrs. Yorke's tea, Mr. Tad Pemberton, as usual, arose late. For the first time in a week he had slept under the parental roof, and the conscious virtue of this rare action was a grateful solace to his somewhat perturbed spirit. For upward of a twelve-month young Pemberton had been leading a life that it were charitable to describe as merely irregular. He had made so bold as to snap his fingers in the face of society, and society, he had been made aware, was not un-resentful. At the open air Horse Show, on St. Martin's Green, at Wissahickon Heights, he had thrown into society's teeth a yellow-tressed creature, who had, the week before, been singing *risqué* songs on the stage of one of the continuous performance theatres, and according to the gossip of men that were less bold, had also been engaged to perform at a New York roof garden during the summer. Her loud laughter had been echoed back by young Pemberton into the very

ears of innocent society débutantes with whom he had waltzed at the Dancing Class and the Assemblies, and the dear girls had blushed, and hidden their faces with their programmes, in shocked embarrassment. As a result of this, and of florid stories of his subsequent behaviour in New York, where he chose to spend most of the warm weather, he was very generally cut by a certain element when, on one or two occasions, he dropped into Bar Harbor, and appeared at the International Cricket Match in the autumn. A young matron who chanced to be a fellow guest on the coach he was invited to adorn, froze him to the marrow with a speechless stony stare, when he ventured to address her.

For a time the young man, depending upon his family's social position, was wont to ignore these sporadic evidences of disapproval; but there had lately come to him rumors that he was to be dropped from the Tuesday Dances, and that it was doubtful, in view of the opposition that he had awakened, that he would this year receive the Assembly book. But for a certain unforeseen circumstance, even these reports would have held for him little of terror. Since the advent of the Yorkes, however, he was

most anxious not only to hold his own place in society, but to retain his influence. Mrs. Yorke's beauty fascinated him, and it was his earnest desire to place her, in some way, under obligations to him. He had little doubt that she and her husband would be on the list for the Tuesday Dances, since his mother had taken care to present her to Mrs. Brokaw, but he was by no means so well assured that the Assembly managers would recognize the newcomers, unless they were especially reminded, too, by someone whose word possessed some weight. With his own position in the balance, he understood that it would be useless to intercede for another, and yet he had determined that the obligation he desired to impose upon Mrs. Yorke, could be imposed in no more effectual way than this.

With this end in view he had pulled himself up suddenly, and had resolved, for a time at least, to be more discreet. His visits to the quiet, inconspicuous, dark red brick house on South Fifteenth street, where, since the close of the New York roof garden season, Miss Dolly Foster had been snugly ensconced in a pair of rooms for which young Pemberton had paid the rent, were to be less frequent. For the present he would

not be seen with her in the street, at the theatre, or in the Park. He had thought of sending her away on a visit to New York, but she had declined to go unless he accompanied her, and of course that was out of the question.

On the night before the day of Mrs. Yorke's tea he had sat late in the Bellevue café, drinking Scotch and soda with one of the Assembly managers, Mr. C. Norton Phelps, a tall, soldierly-looking person, with the accent and manners of an officer in the British army. Mr. Phelps was several years young Pemberton's senior, and a man of the world! The conversation, that had at first been desultory, eventually turned on women, as conversations between men are apt to turn, and young Pemberton asked :

“ You've met Mrs. Yorke, haven't you ? ”

“ Yorke ! ” repeated Mr. Phelps, as he lighted a cigarette, “ Yorke ! Let me see. That's not the fat woman that made such a sensation at Devon Inn with a décolleté gown that failed to justify the reliance she placed on it ? ”

“ Good God ! No ! ” returned Pemberton in disgust. “ She's from New York. She and—— ”

“ I've heard of it ! ” interrupted his companion, frowning a little, “ Perhaps you had better not

mention the subject to me. I don't want to know too much about it. A woman that you know very well wrote me the other day that on account of this affair of yours she had hoped that—Well, she said that she could not permit her daughters to go to the Assemblies this year, if you were there."

Young Pemberton stared at the speaker in amazement. Then, suddenly, a light broke on him, and the situation was revealed. Phelps was evidently thinking of Dolly. It was most unfortunate that this subject should have cropped up just at the moment that he most wished it forgotten. However, he did what he could to put matters straight.

"No, no, no," he said, impatiently, "you're away off the track. Yorke is vice-president of our company, and his wife is a very charming woman. They're living at the Salisbury."

"I beg her pardon," said Phelps; and then, after a pause, "No, I haven't met her."

"I see you haven't," added Pemberton, laconically. He recognized now that it was useless to press the subject. He would, in all probability, do more harm than good by pursuing it, so he turned to a new theme, and asked Mr. Phelps

if he proposed going to the foot-ball game on Saturday.

At one o'clock the Bellevue café closed, and they adjourned to the Philadelphia Club. It was three, when young Pemberton let himself into the family mansion on West Rittenhouse square. The evening had not been a profitable one, he told himself, and he felt that he really had very little to offer Mrs. Yorke when he should see her at her tea. Time and circumstances, however, make opportunities that cannot be foreseen ; and there are more ways than one of forging the shackles of obligation.

Young Pemberton breakfasted at the Rittenhouse Club, which was convenient, and while waiting for his grilled kidneys, glanced casually over the columns of the *New York Herald*. With the perverseness of his nature he began at the last page, and ran through the paper to the first, on the first column of which, being the last that his eye fell upon, he found the only item of interest in the whole journal. It was an advertisement under the head of "Personals," and it possessed for him such a suddenly-evolved, yet deep, concern, that he read it over and over again, smiling each time more broadly and pleas-

edly. The copy that he held in his hand, in spite of the fact that it was the property of the club, would have gone into his pocket had it not been that it was attached to an ungainly binder. His impudence was not equal to abstracting it, and he accordingly sent out a waiter to purchase a *Herald* for him at the nearest newstand.

Armed with this, he rode down Chestnut street to the office of the company of which his father was president, Yorke, vice-president, and himself, a director. These were located on the upper floor of the Drexel Building and were elaborate rooms, handsomely furnished, a general office in the centre, with the private offices of the several officers grouped around it. He knocked at Yorke's door, but there was no response. It was after one o'clock, and a pretty stenographer from her place as a typewriter in the general office informed him that Mr. Yorke and his father were both out at luncheon.

Nothing could have pleased him better. He entered the vice-president's room, and taking the copy of the *Herald* from his pocket, folded it with the first column outward, and placed it upon Yorke's desk in a most conspicuous position. He stood for a moment contemplating his work and

wondering whether the advertisement that had so quickly caught his own eye would as swiftly attract the attention of Mr. Newland Yorke. Yorke might, he feared, in the hurry of business, sweep the paper to one side and into the waste basket, and yet he hesitated about indicating more definitely that it had been placed there with a purpose.

As he turned the subject over, an inspiration came to his rescue. He sat down at the desk, dipped a pen deep into the ink, and, holding it carefully and accurately above the paper, allowed a large blot to drop upon the margin at the side of the few lines that he particularly wished Yorke to see. The blot, of course, might have been an accident. Then he scribbled a line to Yorke asking whether he desired seats for the football game on Saturday. It was necessary to account for his presence in this office, should questions be asked, and the paper might provoke enquiry. The note would explain the newspaper, left there by accident, and it would also give an excuse for the blot upon it, without suggesting—at least with any degree of certainty,—an intention.

On his way to the street, young Pemberton purchased another copy of the *Herald*, and smiled

sardonically as he stored it snugly away in a hip pocket. He spent the afternoon at the Racquet Club, and when he arrived at the Salisbury, the clock in the white tower of the old State House was striking five, and behind its four faces the light had been lit.

The street in front of the house was a crush of private carriages and the throng in Mrs. Yorke's bijou drawing room had bubbled over into her lilliputian boudoir. Miss Cottelin, a tailor-made girl, whom Montie Willington had once in paraphrase described as "the lass of fashion with the moulded form," was bidding her hostess good-bye as young Pemberton entered; and the usual exchange of civilities was in progress.

"Your rooms are lovely!" the "lass of fashion" remarked.

"So glad you think so," returned Mrs. Yorke for the twenty-fourth time inside of an hour, in reply to the same observation. "Do come and see them sometime when everything is not hidden behind beautiful gowns."

Young Pemberton extended his gray-gloved hand.

"I came late, hoping to run across Yorke," he said, in apology for the hour.

"How very unkind of you! It is my tea, you know."

"O, ah ; yes," he added, a little flustered, "when Yorke gives a poker party or something, I'll come early, hoping to run across you."

"Perversity, thy name is Pemberton," laughed Mrs. Yorke, as she poured tea for him into a Louis Philippe cup that she had bought at a junk shop in the Rue de Rivoli, when in Paris on her honeymoon journey. "Mr. Yorke won't be here," she pursued, regretfully, placing a cube of sugar on the saucer; "he was called away suddenly to New York. When one is in business, you know, one's time is not one's own."

"I dare say."

"You were never in business, I suppose, Mr. Pemberton?"

"Business," he repeated between sips; "well, it depends, you know, on what you call business. I've often been called suddenly to New York."

Mrs. Yorke looked at him with a question in her deep blue eyes. There was something in his tone that she did not altogether understand. Before she could pursue the subject further, however, Mrs. Martineau had come up to say good-bye, and then Miss Bassett ; and, after a moment,

Mrs. Brokaw, whose departure seemed to be the signal for a general leave-taking.

Young Pemberton finished his tea, and placing the cup on the dainty little mahogany and gold Empire table, walked over to where Miss Logan, in a gown of gray and white with black lace, ages too youthful for the adornment of her withered charms, was standing with her back to the now rapidly thinning company and gazing out of the window.

"I was just thinking," she said, when she had touched the hand that the young man offered, "that if we were to leave out of our conversation all scandal, gossip and empty compliments, how frightfully dull we should all seem!"

"You could hear a pin drop," acquiesced Pemberton.

"Exactly; and yet I'll venture to say that when you entered this room, you could scarcely hear your own voice."

"I couldn't."

"From which you would be perfectly right in arguing that ——"

"Scandal, gossip and empty compliments were on every one's tongue," Pemberton interrupted.

"If we were forbidden to speak well of our-

selves and evil of others we'd soon become a community of mutes," continued the spinster. "By the way, have you heard about Mrs. Charley Bright? Someone saw her at the Girard avenue theatre the other night with Nellie Farrell and two Philadelphia Club men. The Girard avenue theatre of all places! Girard avenue, you know, is somewhere up-town—*way* up-town; and after that, where do you suppose they went? To some impossible beer saloon—up stairs, by the ladies' entrance—and drank beer. What is society coming to?"

"Ask where it is going to, and the answer suggests itself," returned her companion.

Miss Logan giggled and displayed a double-row of artificial ivories.

"I must be off," she added, "I dine at the Spruce-Pines to-night. Isn't it heartrending how that man treats his angel of a wife? How she bears up under it, I don't see, and yet she is always cheerful. They say that other woman has a Persian lamb coat this winter that is an exact copy of hers."

Miss Logan went away, but young Pemberton remained.

"So sorry not to have seen Yorke," he re-

sumed as soon as an opportunity presented itself of getting near Mrs. Yorke again. "I dropped in at the office to-day to ask him about the foot ball game on Saturday, but he was out. How long does he expect to be in New York?"

"I really don't know. He sent home for his satchel, and just a line saying that business made it imperative that he go at once."

The suspicion of a smile floated across young Pemberton's features; and Mrs. Yorke observed it.

"Do you know what the business was?" she asked, unable to restrain the curiosity that the smile provoked.

"I!" he exclaimed, in apparent surprise, "O, dear, no! I know nothing whatever about the details of the office. It might have been one of a thousand things connected with the company's affairs, and it might have been—but no, of course not!"

"What do you mean?"

"I was about to say that it might have been a private matter." Pemberton slowly extracted a newspaper from his hip pocket. "Of course you never read the 'Personals' in the *Herald*," he said.

“Mr. Pemberton!”

“I didn’t expect that you did. Therefore you couldn’t have seen this one,” and he pointed out an advertisement and handed her the paper.

What Mrs. Yorke read was this :

EKROY DNALWEN.—Must see you to-day (Tuesday) sure. Let nothing stand in your way. Same place as before. NANA.

“I am sure,” she said, in a relieved voice, “that I see nothing in that. What is it?”

“The name.”

“The name,” she repeated looking at it again, “Why it’s Scandinavian—Norwegian or something. It conveys nothing to me.”

“Read it backwards,” suggested Pemberton ; and as her eyes bent upon the paper, an expression that was Mephistophielan swept over the young man’s lean, smooth-shaven face.

CHAPTER IV

MARIONETTES WITH BROKEN STRINGS

MRS. YORKE made a change of toilet, hurriedly and with trembling fingers. In the presence of young Pemberton, who had been the last of her guests to leave, she had done some capital acting, and the effort had left her nervously unstrung. She had pretended to understand the personal and to invest it with but slight importance, and she had pretended so well that her visitor was almost deceived by her assumed nonchalance. But now that he was gone and there was no longer any need for masquerading, she gave evidence of how powerful was the blow that those few lines of type had dealt her. In the process of changing her gown, her thoughts being far away, she unhooked her corsets and sought under the pillow for a belaced and beribboned *robe de nuit*, before realizing that she was not about to retire. Later on, she searched her bureau drawers for the tiny black lace and jet theatre bonnet that she invariably kept on the upper shelf of her wardrobe; and,

when she thought her robing completed, she discovered that she had failed to change her dainty *bottines de suède* for her patent leather walking boots.

Meanwhile the *Herald* personal had taken on a thousand different meanings. She had tried at first to fancy that it was a matter of business, merely, but the signature precluded any such conclusion ; and she ended, and believed herself charitable in so doing, in the belief that it was a communication from one of her husband's ante-marital affinities. A suspicion that he was faithless to her she refused to harbor, though suggestions of his frailty had in the last half hour presented themselves in many different shapes, and the advertisement, and his apparent haste to respond to it, in themselves bore testimony that, to even a less jealous person, would have been convincing. In spite of her leniency, which was due quite as much to her self-esteem as to her trust in her husband's fidelity, she was disposed to retaliate, and when Tad Pemberton had proposed that, Yorke being away, she might, in order to avoid a dull evening at home, dine with him at the Bellevue and go to the play later, she had gladly, not to say enthusiastically, consented. Then Tad

had hurried off home to get into his evening clothes, promising to be back at seven, and to order dinner on the way.

It was ten minutes after the hour named when he presented himself at the door of the Yorke apartment, having left a hansom waiting at the street entrance. Mrs. Yorke, as she answered the tremulous summons of the electric bell, was working her small hands into a pair of new gloves.

"I shall be ready in an instant," she said. "Do you mind if I finish putting on these gloves in the elevator?"

"Not if the elevator boy doesn't," he answered.

Mrs. Yorke looked at him. There was something about his speech that struck her as peculiar—a certain thickness of the tongue that sounded suspicious; and she observed that his cheeks were a trifle flushed.

"The elevator boy is used to it," she added, stepping into the hall and closing the door.

"I'm afraid I'm a little late," Ted observed. "I ran across Montie Willington at the Bellevue, and——"

"I know," interrupted Mrs. Yorke, laughing, "cocktails."

“By Jove!” exclaimed the young man, pleased and surprised, “how did you guess?”

“I have a husband,” she answered, smiling.

“So you have,” returned Pemberton, disappointedly. “But——” he paused a second.

“Let us forget it.”

“I should like to,” she said, “sometimes—but unfortunately I can’t.”

“I’ll help you,” ventured the youth; and then the elevator came up, and they descended in silence, as if not daring to speak before the boy that turned the wheel.

When they reached the hotel, Mr. Pemberton’s table was in readiness, adorned with a huge bunch of La France roses, and glowing under the light of a tiny yellow-shaded lamp. As they sat down the oysters were served.

“Only fancy!” exclaimed Mrs. Yorke, as she drew off the gloves that she had struggled into not ten minutes previous, “not over a dozen tables occupied in the room—and this the most swagger restaurant in the city! And yet I have actually heard people here venture to compare Philadelphia with New York, to New York’s disadvantage.”

"It is a city of homes," ventured Pemberton, "not of restaurants."

"It is not a city at all," Mrs. Yorke replied, her annoyance at being deserted in it by her husband rising up and crushing her policy," it is a collection of brick houses and marionettes—marionettes with broken strings."

Young Pemberton laughed lightly, and, beckoning a waiter, told him to serve the sherry.

"You are mistaken, I think, in one particular," he said, at last. "I have very grave doubts about the strings—I don't think they ever existed."

"O, yes," she persisted; "they may even be intact yet. What is needed, I think, is a few New York people to pull them."

"And mine?"

"I fancy," she answered, smiling, "that yours are already in excellent hands."

He wondered whether she, too, had heard of Dolly Foster, and at that moment discovered that Montie Willington and Mrs. Martineau were seated at an adjacent table.

"What do you think!" he called over to his friend, "Mrs. Yorke declares she has me on a string."

"She's stringin' you," called back Montie, in an admirable imitation of the patrolman in "Reilly and the Four Hundred."

Mrs. Yorke bowed to Mrs. Martineau, and Pemberton explained that Martineau was in Washington on some political business, and that Montie and Mrs. Martineau were going to join them in their box at the theatre.

"What is the play?" she asked, more for want of something to say than out of interest. One play would serve as well as another she told herself, to fill in the gap of the evening, and she questioned, even if the most eloquent masterpiece ever evolved would keep her thoughts away from that *Herald* personal.

"It's a variety show," explained Tad, a little doubtfully. "You've been to Tony Pastor's in New York, haven't you? or to Koster & Bial's?"

"O, yes; once," she answered, not in the least shocked, "and when we are in London, we simply live at the music halls. I am mad over that sort of thing."

"We may see some marionettes," added Pemberton with a laugh.

"I went to one of the roof gardens in New York last summer with Mr. Yorke," his compan-

ion pursued, "and we heard the oddest song there, sung in the most deliciously *chic* way."

"What was it?"

"I don't remember the title, but it was something—well, every other line was: 'And her golden hair was hanging down her back!' It was awfully ridiculous, of course, but we were both charmed by the girl who sang it. I forget her name; but she was simply lovely, and Mr. Yorke was actually fascinated by her."

Montie Willington was quite near enough to catch this bit of conversation, and he winked knowingly at Pemberton.

"I've heard that woman, Mrs. Yorke," he called with the express intention of annoying his friend, "and she's a teaser. Her name is Dolly Foster."

Mrs. Martineau, who had failed to overhear the conversation, looked across the table at Montie in surprise.

"Sh!" she whispered. "Haven't you any tact, whatever?" But young Mr. Willington only smiled.

"Now *I'm* stringin' him," he said.

The champagne came on with the pheasant, and Mrs. Yorke surprised Pemberton by the way

she emptied her glass. Every drop she drank seemed to infuse new life into her, and the worry and annoyance of the late afternoon grew gradually more dimly indistinct. The *Herald* personal seemed almost like a dream. It had certainly lost its power to unnerve her. She was now perfectly self-possessed, and realized that her appetite was excellent and the company thoroughly congenial. The dinner was capital, and she congratulated Mr. Pemberton on his ability to order, little dreaming that he had left everything to Baptiste.

The performance at the Auditorium, whither they went, was not inspiriting. As compared with Koster & Bial's, or even the Madison Square roof garden, it seemed to Mrs. Yorke, in spite of her three glasses of champagne, preceded by a sip of sherry and a half pint of Ponte Canet, exceedingly dull. Mrs. Martineau, whose exile from New York had lasted longer, and whose libations, perhaps, had been more liberal, laughed and applauded every feature, and finding her so well amused, Montie Willington turned his attention to Mrs. Yorke, who sat in front of him, frowning at young Pemberton, who was palpably drowsy.

“ You haven’t mentioned Spring Garden street to anyone ? ” he whispered with a low laugh.

Mrs. Yorke’s frown gave way to a smile.

“ No, ” she answered.

“ I knew you hadn’t boasted of it. ”

“ Why ? ”

“ I saw Mrs. Cadwalader-Beech at your tea this afternoon.

“ I don’t understand—— ”

“ Haven’t you learned yet ? Why they say that woman won’t have even a servant in her house that ever lived north of Market street. ”

“ I shall tell her my origin the next time I see her, ” Mrs. Yorke declared.

“ Don’t—for her sake, ” pleaded Willington, “ the shock might prove fatal—she has accepted tea at your hands. ”

“ Suppose she should find me out ? ”

“ In that case it would be tit for tat. ”

“ Tit for tat ? ”

“ Yes. You would in turn find her out—when you called. ”

With this style of badinage they made away with an hour, while Pemberton nodded and Mrs. Martineau shrieked over the somewhat coarse jokes of the comedians and applauded the rather

tinny singing of the soubrettes. The wine had colored her face, and if she blushed, the blush was invisible.

After the concluding farce the men suggested supper, but Mrs. Yorke declined. She pleaded fatigue, and begged them to excuse her. Willington agreed, on one condition: that she should make one of this same *partie carrée* for a drive on his coach the next forenoon to the Country Club. To this she gave a willing assent; and then, at her own suggestion, Pemberton dismissed the hansom that he had kept waiting, and, bidding the others good night, he and she walked together to the Salisbury. She would have left him at the entrance, but he preferred, he said, to see her safely within her own door. She was not a little displeased at the sodden condition he had developed, and his dozing in the box had annoyed her. Doubting his ability to insert the latch-key she undertook to let herself in, unassisted, explaining that the lock was peculiar. As she placed the key in the door, she thought she detected a sound of footsteps within, and started back in affright.

“What is it?” Tad asked.

She had grown suddenly pale, and her hand

was trembling. In an instant, however, she recovered her self-possession.

“I must have been mistaken,” she said, returning to the attack; “no one could possibly——”

She opened the door. Yorke was standing in the passageway.

“You !” she gasped, in surprise. “I thought ——”

“Yes,” he answered, coming forward, “I made short work of it. Hello, Pemberton ; how are you ?”

Tad took his proffered hand.

“Won’t you come in and have a pipe, or cigar, or something ?”

The young man hesitated. A glance at Mrs. Yorke decided him.

“No, thanks !” he said, “I’ve got to meet a fellow at the Club.”

“O, by the way ;” called Yorke, as after saying good night, Tad was retreating toward the elevator, “you may get those tickets, for Saturday, if you will.”

When he turned, his wife had disappeared into her boudoir, slamming the door after her.

CHAPTER V

A BREAK IN THE PARTY

THE slamming of the door awakened Yorke to a sense of his wife's displeasure; and the awakening was a surprise. In vain he cudgeled his brain for an explanation. He had, it was true, been absent on the day that she most wished him with her, but he had explained that it was business that claimed him, and he had never before, so far as he could recollect, found Katherine unreasonable. He had regretted his necessary absence from the festivity of the afternoon as much as she possibly could have done, and he had hastened home at some little personal inconvenience, in order not to leave her alone overnight in a house that was still strange to her. A momentary disappointment had been his when he discovered that she was not in; but this was speedily succeeded by a sense of gratification in discovering that his enforced absence had been in some way compensated for. He was very fond of his wife, and being naturally unselfish, she was

always his first; rather than, as is frequently the case even in the most ideal households, his second, consideration.

He walked through the long, narrow passageway to the drawing room at the further end, where he found evidences still remaining of the crush of the afternoon. Cups and their dregs of tea were still on the table, and here and there, on the floor, were crumbs of vanilla wafers. On a plate, were several untouched tiny caviar and lettuce sandwiches. But what especially attracted his attention and opened up for him an entirely new line of thought was a newspaper lying upon an inlaid tabourette. It was a current copy of the *Herald*, and staring at him from its outspread page was the first column, with its personals; and one personal in particular, that stood out as if in larger type than all the rest.

He left it lying as he had discovered it, and crossed the floor to the door of Mrs. Yorke's boudoir, through which the throng of the afternoon had surged, but which now was closed behind the green brocade portière hung to disguise its glaring white enamel paint. Yorke drew back the curtain and placing his hand upon the knob would have entered, but the lock was turned.

“Pink!” he called—it was a pet name with which he had endowed her—“Pink! Open the door!”

For a moment there was no response. Then he heard the key turned quickly—nervously, in the lock; and he himself turned the knob and entered. Mrs. Yorke’s street gown had been replaced by a looser one of delicate blue with an edging of ermine, and her hair was in a long pendant braid. She was standing before a dressing table with her back turned toward him. He approached her with a smile upon his face. He realized how she had misjudged him, and he was, in truth, more pleased with her jealousy than annoyed by it.

“Pink,” he said, placing his hand upon her shoulder, while she must have seen his smiling face in the mirror into which she was gazing, “Pink, you are angry; aren’t you?”

“No,” she answered. But her tone, meant that she was.

“What are you then?” he asked.

“Nothing.”

“Don’t be nothing,” imploringly.

She made no reply.

"I know the trouble, dear," he went on, "I saw it in the other room."

Still she was silent.

"I am sorry you have discovered it," he began again.

"I have no doubt of that," she replied with biting sarcasm. "It was not intended for me to see ; of that I am sure."

"No," he added seriously, "it was not meant for you to see ; but since you have seen it, and are evidently deceived by it, let me tell you that it was a business matter purely."

She laughed coldly, sneeringly.

"I suppose so," she returned ; "business men usually insert personals in the *Herald*, and spell names backward, and sign themselves 'Nana' when they wish to communicate with other business men, don't they ?"

"The signature," he hastened to correct, "was a stupid blunder."

"I should say it was," she interrupted, laughing derisively.

Yorke, who was reasonably slow to anger, took umbrage at this.

"I say it was a blunder of the typesetter," he explained, with a serious inflection and, having

said it, his lips, as she might have discovered had she glanced once more into the mirror, were tight set.

"And you expect me to believe that?" she replied, without looking up.

"I expect you to believe nothing that you do not wish to believe," answered her husband, coldly.

"It was a pleasant thing to have pointed out to one, wasn't it?" she asked, after a pause.

Yorke, who had walked across to the drawing room door, was now, in turn, silent.

"It was pleasant to have that thrust in my face when I explained that business had called you to New York!"

Yorke stopped suddenly, and turned.

"Who thrust it in your face?" he asked, with more anger in his voice than had yet been there.

"A friend of mine," she answered, turning an exasperating smile full upon him.

"And an enemy of mine."

"O, no, not that. I think he is really very fond of you. I fancy he imagined it a good joke."

"It was Pemberton." Yorke, decided, "the wretched little busy body!"

“I did not say so.”

“It is not necessary for you to say so; I know it. He left a copy upon my desk, marked—marked with a blot that was meant to deceive me. I did not suspect that it was intentional then, for I had already seen the advertisement; but now——”

“You had seen it?” queried Mrs. Yorke.

“I had seen it.”

“Of course you had. That doesn’t surprise me. People that carry on correspondence of that sort, I suppose, are always on the lookout——”

Before she had finished Yorke had, with a gesture of impatience, passed into the drawing room again, closing the door noisily after him.

The interview had not tended to Mrs. Yorke’s reassurance. Her husband’s attempted explanation had been general and vague. He had failed to particularize even the character of the business that was referred to by the advertisement. When he had the opportunity to tell her who this misspelled Nana was, he had avoided doing so, and had ended, as she supposed he would end by showing anger, himself, and by endeavoring to make himself out the injured one of the twain.

She was not sure that, in spite of her words, she did not really believe him, diaphanous as his

explanation was, but she was in no mood to admit that this was the fact. No matter how much a woman may distrust man in the abstract she is slow to lose faith in the individual, especially when the individual is the creature to whom she has given the confidence and love of her virgin youth. For a moment she wished that her husband would return to beseech once more her forgiveness, but she realized that she was not certain that even this would result in reconciliation.

She threw off her dressing gown of blue and ermine and prepared for bed. From the drawing room there came no sound. She donned her belaced and beribboned night gown, but the silence was still unbroken. She passed into her bed chamber and closed the door, and when she was safely and snugly between the sheets, and the lights were extinguished, she fell to sobbing, as the climax of the nervous strain that she had been under.

Suddenly she detected footsteps in the passageway outside her bed room door, where the hall stand was situated. Then she heard the hall door open and close and knew that Newland had gone out. She listened again, and became

conscious of the ascent of the elevator, of its stoppage, and again of its descent. For awhile she lay awake wondering, and still sobbing; and then sleep shut out all sounds and all emotions.

When she awoke the sun was streaming into the room through the dotted Swiss curtains. Yorke was standing in his shirt sleeves, at a chifonier between the windows, and as she looked at his tall, slender, sinewy figure, the back of his head with its carefully brushed glossy black hair, and the generally well-groomed appearance of his *tout ensemble*, she experienced an almost irresistible inclination to cry out—"I love you! I love you! I love you!"

Her pride, however, was paramount. She closed her eyes, feigned sleep, and lay quite motionless until she heard him pass into the hall. Then the clock on the mantel shelf tinkled nine, and she knew that he was hurrying off to the office without so much as a bite of breakfast.

There was something pathetic, she thought, in this energy of his. Only a few months before he had been an idler, free to go and come in his own time; but now it was all changed. There was work for each day, and there were hours that must be punctually heeded. She realized that he

was working for her, too, and began to question herself again as to whether his visit to New York could really have been, as he vowed, in the interest of this business, that now absorbed most of his time and thought. If it was, she blamed him for not taking her more fully into his confidence and explaining the situation to her, forgetting that she had repelled, rather than invited, anything of the kind.

After breakfast she began to regret that she had promised to go to the Country Club. She would have much preferred stopping at home. She even thought of going to the office, just to see New, and let him know that after all she was willing to trust him. Once she sat down to write a regret to Mr. Willington ; but the day was so fine, and—there was the newspaper lying on her desk. She picked it up and re-read the advertisement. Then she closed the desk, and began to dress for the outing.

“*Same place as before. Nana.*” There was certainly nothing businesslike, she told herself, in that wording. It smacked of assignations of which she had read in French novels ; and then the details of these meetings came back to her, and her cheeks flushed, and she forgot that she

loved her husband at all ; forgot the pathos that had started tears to her eyes a few hours before, and hurried into her tailor-made gown, fearful that she might be late at the Stratford, from the door of which the coach was to start.

When she arrived there, the vehicle, all glistening blue and yellow, with its shining brass trimmings, and its four sleek horses, with a smart liveried groom standing at the heads of the leaders, was drawn up in front of the entrance. Montie, in a long, light-colored coaching coat and a cream-tinted furry top hat, was standing on the sidewalk, putting on his driving gloves.

“ I was so afraid you weren’t coming,” he said, with a smile of welcome, “ I didn’t know whether Tad’s absence would make any difference or not.”

“ Mr. Pemberton won’t be here!” exclaimed Mrs. Yorke in surprise.

“ O, dear no,” returned Montie, laughing a little cruelly, “ he’s not fit. You never saw such a face on a man in your life.”

Mrs. Yorke’s expression bespoke her utter ignorance.

“ You haven’t heard about it, then?” Willington went on.

“ Not a word.”

"Well, under the circumstances perhaps I had better not say anything."

"O, but you must!" An intuitive fear taking possession of her.

"But, I'd rather not."

"Then I shall not go with you."

Montie looked perplexed.

"Since you put it that way," he said, after a pause, "there is of course no alternative, but really, Mrs. Yorke, if your husband didn't tell you, I feel that I shouldn't."

"My husband!" she exclaimed, her fear becoming a conviction, "What had he to do with it!"

"Everything," answered the young man, laconically.

"You don't mean that he and Mr. Pemberton fought?" she blurted out, with a strong accent on the last word.

"Not exactly," answered Montie smiling, "Pemberton doesn't seem to have been in it. But your husband's fist became very well acquainted with Tad's features. In fact it was presented to them several times, and it seems to have made a deep and lasting impression upon them."

"How perfectly awful!"

“Poor Tad!”

“Of course you will have to excuse me,” she said after a moment’s hesitation, “under the circumstances I couldn’t think of going.”

Young Willington endeavored to remonstrate.

“No one knows about it,” he said. “Besides, you can’t shut yourself up on that account.”

“I couldn’t think of going,” she repeated, “it’s very kind of you to insist, but I really could not.”

Then she bade him good bye, and, crossing Broad street, retraced her steps down Walnut.

CHAPTER VI

THE FORCING OF AN APOLOGY

AT the next corner, Mrs. Yorke passed the old-fashioned, red brick house of the Philadelphia Club, from the windows of which two or three elderly habitués, with faces only a shade lighter than the bricks, favored her with a stare of impudent admiration. Twelve or thirteen hours previous, her husband had stood upon the broad, low, white marble step of the same club house, had entered its wide portal, and had enquired of the doorman if Mr. Pemberton, junior, was in the building. On receiving an affirmative answer, he had begged that the information be conveyed to him that a gentleman anxiously awaited him at McGowan's—an all-night bar, not more than a stone's throw from the more fashionable Bellevue, but, for men of this ilk, a great deal more retired. It was in McGowan's bar that the affray between Yorke and young Pemberton, which Mr. Willington had so briefly, yet graphically described, took place, and it was from

McGowan's bar, after the affray was over, that young Pemberton hastened to the refuge of the rooms on South Fifteenth street, for which he paid rental.

Miss Dolly Foster, reclining in a comfortably-upholstered arm chair, with her dainty feet supported by an ottoman, was puffing a cigarette, and reading a New York dramatic paper between puffs. On the table beside her were a lamp, a glass, and a half emptied bottle of beer. At sight of Tad, her feet came down, the cigarette dropped from her lips, and the paper fell to the floor.

"You're a sight!" she exclaimed, staring at his battered countenance. "What on earth has happened to you?"

"Trolleyosis!" answered Tad, determined not to tell that he was worsted in a fistic encounter; "a collision and I was thrown down."

Dolly lowered her head a trifle and looked at him through her right eyebrow, an expression of incredulity playing about her lips.

"Rats!" she said, quietly, "you've been hammered."

"I tell you," repeated Tad, "I was in a trolley car that collided with another car, and I was thrown down and dragged."

"How were you dragged, if you were in the car?"

"I mean I was on the platform."

"Better say you were just getting on."

"So I was."

"No you weren't! You weren't near a trolley car. You were in a fight, and the other fellow was too good for you. He must have landed six or seven times on your face."

"O, well," exclaimed the victim impatiently, "since you won't believe me, have it your own way; only, for God's sake, get some stuff out, and try to do something for these cuts and bruises."

There was no "stuff" to get out, Dolly said, so she rang for a messenger, and sent him after court plaster, and witch hazel, and a half dozen raw oysters, having heard that raw oysters, bound over a bruised eye, would prevent discoloration.

"Who did it?" she asked, when the boy had been dispatched.

Tad made no answer. He threw himself down on a couch, and wiped away the blood that oozed from a cut in his lip.

"You ought to take boxing lessons," Dolly suggested.

"Damn it!" shouted Pemberton, irritably. "Shut up! He was a bigger man than I am, and——"

The rest of the sentence was drowned in Dolly's laughter.

"I knew it," she cried, delightedly, "I knew it. What is the use of trying to deceive me? What was it all about?"

The young man was silent.

"You were both drunk, I suppose?" she suggested.

"No," he replied, "we were neither of us drunk."

"What was it, then?"

Pemberton was angry with her for her persistence.

"If you must know," he said, "we both love the same woman."

Her vanity blinded her to the import of his words.

"It was about me, then," she concluded, somewhat gayly. "Who was he? It wasn't——"

"No, no, no," interrupted Tad, who failed

to appreciate the gayety of her tone, "it wasn't anybody that you know."

"An unknown mash?" she laughed. "Well, why need you have quarrelled with him? Aren't you satisfied with my preference for you?"

Tad rolled over in disgust, his face to the wall.

"Where the devil is that boy?" he cried, after a pause. "My face is swelling terribly, and my eye will be as black as my hat."

For two days the young man kept to these rooms, and when at last he went out, he was still considerably disfigured. At the Rittenhouse Club he found a letter two days old, from Mrs. Yorke, in which she said that she was more sorry than she could tell to hear of what had happened. She hoped that he would relieve her of all blame in the matter. She had not told Mr. Yorke a word. He had guessed it, himself. And she added as a postscript: "I am so angry that I have scarcely spoken a word to him since." Young Pemberton rubbed his hands with delight. He did not regret his injuries now in the least. Everything seemed to be working his way. He had feared all along that Mrs. Yorke had instigated the attack upon him; but now he discovered that he had her sympathy, and "sympathy"

—he concluded, “well, everybody knows what that is akin to.”

As he was about to pass out of the club house he saw Yorke's name posted on the list of proposed members, and smiled as he thought how, when the vote on that name should be taken, there would be at least one black ball to be tallied—a black ball from which Yorke could have no appeal. In that way he would have a part of his revenge. The sweetest part would come later. He was fully determined upon that; and, in order to obtain it, it would be necessary for him to seemingly do Yorke a favor, for he could not secure the Assembly book for the wife and not the husband. Already he had placed Mrs. Yorke under a certain obligation in showing her that her husband was unworthy, as he believed, of her devotion; and that she valued this, was made evident by the note that he had just received. When he should obtain for her the coveted bid to the Assemblies, her cup of obligation, he fancied, would be full; and this, combined with a desire to revenge herself upon Yorke, ought, he thought, to make his conquest comparatively easy. With these plans running riot

in his brain, he boarded a Chestnut street car, and rode down to the office of the company.

He was anxious to know what course Yorke would take when he came face to face with him again, and he thought it wise that their first meeting after the episode at McGowan's should be, if possible, where no social scandal could arise from it. He remembered that he had promised to secure tickets for Yorke for the foot ball game at Manheim on the coming Saturday, which was one of the society events of the autumn; but, under the circumstances, he had, of course, no intention of furnishing them. The three for which he had asked, in advance, had been sent to him, but he proposed to allow Yorke to squander his money with the speculators, rather than do him this favor. One of the seats he meant to exchange for something less desirable in another part of the stand, and to give it to Dolly, who had expressed a desire to go; and then to invite Mrs. Martineau, or some other congenial spirit to share with him the remaining two.

As he entered the office, he met his father at the door. Mr. Pemberton, senior, was going out.

At sight of his son, his features assumed a scowl.

“Thaddeus,” exclaimed the old gentleman, with well-feigned surprise, “What in heaven’s name is the matter with your face?”

Thaddeus fell back on his original story.

“I met with an accident on one of the new trolley cars,” he said.

Mr. Pemberton coughed once or twice to disguise his annoyance at this bare-faced lie; for the story of the affair had already reached his ears, and had been explained by Yorke, to his entire satisfaction. He had sided with the company’s vice-president in the matter, against his son, and the attempt of the youth to deceive him embittered him all the more.

“You did nothing of the sort,” he replied, sternly; “you interfered in a gentleman’s private business, and he, rightly and justly, thrashed you for it. Why can’t you tell the truth?”

Tad was, for a moment, nonplussed.

“Since the gentleman has seen fit to tell of the affair,” he said, at last, “there is no longer any need for me to disguise it. I did not feel at liberty to make public the——” He hesitated a moment before completing the sentence—“the scandal,” he added.

“Scandal!” exclaimed Pemberton, senior, “is not the word.”

“Excuse me,” replied his son, “but I disagree with you.”

“Mr. Yorke,” continued the other, “went to New York to meet a gentleman regarding a matter of vital importance. He was particularly anxious that Mrs. Yorke should know nothing of the affair. Even had it been a woman that he went to see, as you supposed, it was a most ungentlemanly act on your part to expose him to his wife. Mr. Yorke explained the situation to me, after I heard a garbled story of the encounter from a witness who did not understand the merits of the case. What I wish you to do, now, is to go to Mr. Yorke and apologize.”

“I refuse,” returned Tad, bluntly. “I think the apology should come from him.”

“I command you to go!” shouted his father, his face crimson.

“And I decline,” replied the young man, coolly.

The color in the cheeks of Pemberton, *père*, faded to an ashen white. His hands twitched nervously, and his lips were drawn so tightly that only a streak, like a scar, marked his mouth.

“Step into this room with me, a moment;” he ordered, in a voice that Tad did not dare disobey. Once in his private office, he motioned the young man to be seated, and he, himself, took a chair near him. He was still pale, and, when he spoke, his voice trembled.

“I had no intention of telling you,” he began, seriously, “but you have forced it from me. This company, as well as others, has been feeling the stress of the financial depression. We are in an exceedingly tight place. This affair of yours has angered Yorke—and I do not blame him for being angered—and he threatens to draw out of the concern. If he should force his stock upon the market now, an investigation into our affairs would result, and an investigation would expose our weakness. For me—for you—it would mean financial ruin. Yorke’s personal credit is excellent. He has been of great service to us, in getting money when we most needed it. We cannot afford to lose him. Do you understand? We cannot afford to lose him, and you must apologize.”

Tad looked at the carpet. The pill was a very bitter one for him to swallow. He searched the corners of his brain for some means of escape, but

there was none there, to offer itself. He looked out of the window, across the brick pile of the old State House, and wished that he dare declare his individual independence ; but he realized that it would be too costly.

“ Come ! ” urged his father, “ I tell you, you must.”

“ All right ! ” he said, at last. “ Since that is the situation, I suppose I must ; but—I’d rather lose my tongue than utter——”

“ Tush ! ” interrupted the old gentleman, “ Don’t be a fool ! ”

In the pocket of his coat young Pemberton found the three tickets for the football game. He took out two, and with them in his hand, he walked across the middle room to Yorke’s private office, and entered. Yorke glanced up in surprise. The visit was certainly the last thing that he had expected. He had counted upon the young man’s enmity, and he could not fathom the reason for this call.

“ I am very sorry for that affair the other day, Yorke,” Tad blurted out, stammering a little, “ and I apologize. Here are the tickets I promised you.”

For the words Yorke was of course thoroughly

unprepared ; but he was quick of thought, and equally quick of action. He arose from his chair and extended his hand.

“ Very well,” he said, calmly, “ we’ll let by-gones be by-gones. But——” he paused for a second, and then continued, “ as for the tickets, I’m afraid I can’t take them ; I don’t know that I shall be able to go. What I should much prefer, in view of everything——” and he gave particular stress to this last phrase——“ is that you, yourself, take Mrs. Yorke. I’ll try to find you during the afternoon, and may possibly accept your seat for a little while, if you’ll give it up to me.”

The surprise was now Tad’s, but he was not a thick-witted youth, and he saw in an instant the object of all this. Society would soon be talking—for aught he knew it might already be talking—of the fisticuffs at McGowan’s, and evolving theories of its own as to the cause. The most natural theory, he realized, must involve Mrs. Yorke. He and she had dined together at the Bellevue during Yorke’s absence ; she had gone to the theatre with him ; he had gone home with her afterwards ; and then, later, on the same night, Yorke had pounded his face to something very

like a pulp. From all this, he saw, there was but one natural conclusion to be drawn, and he quite understood Yorke's desire to refute it. Should all three be seen together at Manheim, the story would fall very flat. From his pocket he drew forth the third ticket.

"I have another ticket, here," he said; "the seats are all together. If you like I'll use that."

"It would please me better," added the other, "if you would take Mrs. Yorke, and let me use the third ticket."

"As you like," replied Tad; "I shall only be too glad."

And then he went out, feeling not nearly so sure of his conquest as he had felt a half hour before.

CHAPTER VII

AS A MUTUAL FRIEND

HAVING learned the method adopted by her husband to indicate his disapproval of young Pemberton's interference in his domestic affairs, Mrs. Yorke had at once began to indicate her disapproval of that method. Her note to the young man, which she took particular care that Yorke should see, was a part of the indication. Yorke had, very naturally, objected to her sending it, and in disregarding his wishes she had found a certain measure of satisfaction. She had upbraided him not a little for his aggressive action, and had pointed out to him, with some force of argument, that he had merely succeeded in putting her in a very false and embarrassing position. It was she that had suggested how society would view the affair, and she had exaggerated, rather than endeavored to hide, her sense of mortification at the light into which she declared he had forced her.

This first interview on the subject over, she relapsed into a studied silence that, to Yorke,

soon grew almost unbearable. Half the time she made no answer to his questions, and his remarks invariably failed to elicit any reply. In justice to her it may be said that she was more pained by the whole affair than she could tell. She argued that if the object of her husband's visit to New York was simply a matter of business, there was no reason for him to have grown so angry over the fact that Tad Pemberton had shown her the advertisement that invited it. The more she thought on the subject, the more was she convinced that she had excellent cause for jealousy; and for half a day she seriously contemplated leaving Newland Yorke forever, and going back to her mother and step-father. She realized, however, that Mr. Van Vrancken had about all he could do to make both ends meet as it was, and, moreover, she dreaded the scandal that such a course would precipitate. Like many a woman before her she preferred to suffer her present mortification in silence, rather than increase it by summoning the world for an audience. A wound is not healed by baring it for public inspection. On the contrary, such a course encourages septic deposits, and the danger of serious consequences is increased many fold.

Mrs. Yorke threw herself into the social vortex and made an effort to find forgetfulness in the rush and eddy of constantly recurring luncheons, teas and dinners. In a vain attempt to still the wagging tongues of the unconscionable gossips, Yorke frequently accompanied his wife, but experienced very little real enjoyment in it all. Katharine was as distant from him, it appeared, as the north pole, and about as frigid. As he sat opposite to her at dinner and watched her chatting animatedly with the man beside her, he sometimes wondered whether she was really his wife, and made efforts to recall the days, not a week gone, when she was as merry and cheerful with him as she was now with this almost utter stranger. But those days seemed a very long distance off, and he questioned whether they would ever come again. Sometimes he grew angry, protested that she was silly and unreasonable, and threatened that as he had "the name" he might as well have "the game," but she only smiled sarcastically, and shrugged her shoulders, as to say: "It is of no possible interest to me what you do!" Then he would go out disheartened, and seek congenial companionship at one of the clubs to gain entrance to which re-

quired less time and red tape than to the Rittenhouse.

Meanwhile, in addition to this trouble at home, Yorke was experiencing no little annoyance in not having been able to carry on a mission that he had undertaken at the request of the person who had called him to New York by means of that unfortunate personal. The time allowed was now growing very short, and he had thus far been unable to discover the whereabouts in Philadelphia of the woman whom it was imperative he should see, and see quickly. He had, it is true, for obvious reasons, been loath to make enquiries where information could have readily been obtained, but even had he been sure of securing it in that quarter the address he desired, it is questionable whether he would have asked it. He was certainly not in a position to seek of Tad Pemberton any favor; and especially was he handicapped when it came to make a request of him in confidence. At the football game, however, fortune—in this respect, at least—smiled upon him.

The day was, wet, chill and dismal; but the crowd was inspiring and the display of bright colors in flags, ribbons, umbrellas, gowns, hats and flowers lent to the spectacle an artificial brightness

that glowed through all the rain and mist, and robbed the lowering gray clouds and the lurking mud puddles of more than half their depressing influences.

The field of the Germantown Cricket Club at Manheim is a long, broad, and level one. On one side is the club house, modeled after a colonial pattern and on the other, a permanent grand stand, with details, such as columns and medallion ornamentation, of the same general style. On this occasion an additional temporary grand stand of mammoth proportions had been erected in front of the club house, shutting it almost entirely from view, and at either end of the field were slanting platforms for those that chose to stand.

When Yorke arrived play had already been begun, and every available space seemed to be thronged with enthusiastic humanity. His ticket called for admission to the covered permanent stand, but he turned aside for a moment to the sloping platform at the end of the enclosure, where he wedged his way into the crowd and craned his neck to get a glimpse of the players. A voice behind him, hoarse with shouting, yelled to him to put down his umbrella, and he smilingly obeyed, and for a while stood un-

shielded in the pelting rain watching the mud-be-grimed gladiators of Pennsylvania and Princeton striving, struggling, battling for the mastery, the one side straining every muscle and nerve to force the ball down the field, and the opposing side rising like a barricade of stone against its progress.

At one moment the supporters of the red and blue of Pennsylvania broke into uproarious cheers, and the next thousands of orange and black flags were frantically waving for Princeton. Yorke was a Harvard man, and his sympathies in the present case were with the university of his adopted city. The play, he observed, was almost in the middle of the field, with little advantage to either side, and he considered it an excellent time to make his way, if possible, to his seat. He found the covered grand stand packed to the bubbling-over point, but he managed by dint of squeezing, pushing and wriggling, not unaccompanied by many polite requests and apologies, to reach the section in which his seat was situated. He tried, over the heads of the crowd below him, to count to the row upon which his wife and her escort were sitting, but some people were leaning forward and others were leaning back, and he

searched vainly to discover either Mrs. Yorke or Pemberton.

In the effort he bent forward himself against the back of a woman on the last row, and disarranged her hat, for which, as she turned her face somewhat angrily toward him, he began to beg her pardon; but he stopped short in the middle of his speech. The face was in some respects a familiar one. He had seen it months before on the stage of the Madison Square Roof Garden, in New York. It had made an impression upon him then, by reason of its piquant beauty, and he had not forgotten it. It was moreover, the face of the woman for whom he had been searching for four days.

"I am really sorry," he had begun, and then he had stopped suddenly. "But," he resumed, "you'll pardon me, won't you? Isn't this Miss Foster?"

Dolly's angry expression disappeared on the instant. Yorke was a handsome man. He was, moreover, a distinguished looking man. He possessed that air, which, for want of something more definite, has been called aristocratic.

"Yes," Dolly answered, with a smile. She was angry with Tad that he had not taken her to

the game himself, instead of allowing her to battle with the crowd that had nearly squeezed her to death while waiting for the special train at the Broad Street Station; and it seemed to her that an opportunity for a very sweet revenge was about to offer itself.

"I thought I could not be mistaken," added Yorke, "I think we have a mutual friend—Mr. Alan Van Vrancken."

"Yes," Dolly said again, her eyes evidencing her interest. "He used to be a friend of mine, but I haven't seen him for ——"

"He was asking after you a few days ago," interrupted Yorke. "I understood him to say he was not in possession of your present address."

"And I haven't his, either," returned Dolly. "Did he know I was in Philadelphia?"

"He suspected it, and he told me that, should I meet you, I was to deliver a message to you from him."

"What was it?" she asked, her curiosity aroused.

"I can't tell you here, very well," Yorke temporized; "but if I might be permitted to call on you for—say for five minutes, I'd——"

"Of course you may," Miss Foster hastened to

reply. "I am living there——" and she drew a card from her *porte-monnaie* and handed it to him.

"May I come this evening?" he pursued.
"I'll not detain you long."

"As long as you like," she answered, with a smile that revealed all the beauty of her matchless teeth.

Yorke, as he raised his head from bending over her, glanced once more across the rows of people in front of him, and, as he did so, his gaze met that of Tad Pemberton, who seemed now, strangely enough, to stand conspicuously out from among the hundreds of men and women surrounding him. The gaze impressed Yorke as rather unfriendly, which did not surprise him, yet it caused him to speculate as to how long Tad had been watching him, and whether he had been a witness to the conversation. If he had, Yorke felt sure that Mrs. Yorke would hear of it before she returned to the Salisbury, if Tad could find opportunity to tell her. There was but one way to avoid this consummation, and that was not to let the opportunity present itself.

With this object uppermost in his mind he began pushing his way toward the vacant seat beside his wife. Just as he reached it the air was

rent by a mighty roar of triumph from the Princeton cohorts. Again their orange and black flags were frantically waved. Men were throwing their hats high into the air, and disregarding where they fell. A youth with an orange and black muffler about his throat, stood up in his seat and shrieked: "Five hundred to a hundred, that Pennsylvania won't score!" Princeton had achieved a touch down, by a fluke, and her supporters were in a frenzy of delight.

CHAPTER VIII

AND AN EAVESDROPPER

YOUNG Pemberton had observed Yorke when he raised his hat to the entrancing Dolly, and from that moment his eyes had not wandered. As he watched the exchange of smiles, the moving lips, and the final pleased and satisfied bow and nod, he recollected what Mrs. Yorke had unwittingly divulged over the dinner table at the Bellevue, a few nights before. He remembered her declaration that her husband had been fascinated by the girl who sang an inane song at the Madison Square Roof Garden. To that girl he had just seen Yorke talking, and the sight had aroused in him certain conflicting emotions. He had no notion of yielding Dolly to any rival suitor. He was exceedingly proud of having won the favor of a stage celebrity, as callow young men of his ilk are apt to be, and after having boasted in his club of his conquest and expended a good round sum to effect it, into the bargain, he was in no mood to retire gracefully in Yorke's

favor. On the other hand, however, he was now engaged in a campaign which would, he felt sure, be materially furthered by a defeat in this very quarter. As he thought over the matter, it appeared to him that he might have to take his choice, but he feared that possibly, like the dog in the fable, on letting go the prize in possession for the greater one that tempted him, he would discover that he had snapped at the reflection and lost the reality.

The ancestors of Mr. Thaddeus Pemberton were Quakers, and the young man had inherited a good deal of their shrewdness. He had no intention of paying any more dearly for the whistle which he now coveted, than was absolutely necessary. After due consideration he concluded that it would be policy for him to permit Yorke to try his wiles upon Dolly, making sure, meanwhile, if possible, that Dolly should not yield. In that way he could increase Mrs. Yorke's jealousy and her desire to retaliate, and at the same time defeat Yorke's purpose. Of woman's virtue young Pemberton had a very poor opinion, and as for virtue in man, he did not believe that it existed. Not for a moment did he fancy that Yorke's object in speaking to Dolly could be

other than his own in cultivating Mrs. Yorke. For him there was but one goal to be attained, in association with women ; and he prided himself that no football team on the gridiron field was more skilful in strategic achievement, than was he in this particular game in which he conceived all men to be his rivals. It was indeed a form of insanity with which he was afflicted—a monomania that is unfortunately by no means uncommon.

Mrs. Yorke had invited him to dine at the Salisbury, but he had trumped up an excuse about promising to meet a Princeton man at dinner at the University Club, and had gone instead to the little dark red brick house on South Fifteenth street, and had ordered dinner sent around from the Bellevue. When he arrived there, Dolly had not returned. He took off the heavy fur-lined coat that he had worn to the game, and hung it upon the rack in the hall, which, he observed, for some unknown reason, Dolly had decorated in orange and black. The rooms seemed cold, so he rang the bell, and ordered a fire in the parlor grate ; and a mulatto girl of pleasing face and rather shapely form came in and built it.

Pemberton watched her critically as, stooping, she piled the kindling, and placed upon it a block

or two of cannel coal. The curves of her figure pleased him, and her profile as it showed against the glare of the blaze that she started, reminded him of a picture that he had seen somewhere of the head of a dusky Cleopatra. When, her task finished, she rose and was about to go out, he interrupted her, and slipped his arm about her waist.

"Sally," he said, wooingly, "I like you!"

The girl twisted herself free, with a good-natured laugh.

"Go 'way, sah," she chuckled, "I'se married."

Another moment, and she had gone, closing the door after her.

Tad walked to where a great lamp with crimson porcelain shade rested on a centre table, and striking a match, lighted it. He was smiling, somewhat cynically.

"As if that made any difference!" he mused.

He sat down in a heavy, richly upholstered Morris chair, and from the table he picked up a book.

"I wonder what she reads," he queried. The volume was a square, thin one, bound in gray paper, without a word of title on its cover. It looked as if it might be theatre programmes,

roughly bound, and Tad suspected that such it was. When he turned the pages, however, he discovered his mistake. It was a book of quotations—and such quotations!—every line reeked with obscenity. It delighted him. He laughed aloud. Then his curiosity got the better of his present enjoyment, and he turned to the title page. He fancied that it was a book gotten up for private circulation by some lover of the erotic; but it was nothing of the kind. It was a defence of Zola, published in London, and bore upon its initial leaf this legend: “Extracts, principally from the English classics, showing that the legal suppression of M. Zola’s novels would legally involve the Bowdlerizing of some of the greatest works in English literature.”

He began again to read the extracts.

“I’m not very well up in the English classics,” he told himself, “and so I might as well improve my mind.”

When he had read a dozen lines the door burst open, and Dolly Foster presented herself. She wore a light cloth, tailor-made gown, the skirt of which was mud-smirched a foot from the floor. The ostrich feathers on her large hat hung

straight and limp. She shivered as she came in, and rushed across to the welcome fire.

"You're a nice sort of a man, ain't you?" she said, with her back to him, holding up first one tiny foot and then the other to the genial glow of the blazing lumps of coal.

"Go hang yourself——"

"What!" she exclaimed.

"I was reading aloud," he answered, without lifting his head. "Shakespeare. This is a very nice book you have here."

"Oh! that!" she said.

"Yes, this," he replied, in a tone of annoyance. "Where did it come from? Who gave it to you?"

"A friend of mine," she answered.

"Your friends are my enemies," rejoined Tad.

"Who was it?"

"I shan't tell you."

He threw the book across the room and it knocked a small green Dresden vase on the cabinet into splinters. He rose, and going to her clutched her arm.

"Don't be ugly," she said, with more of threatening than pleading in her tone. "I won't put up with it."

"Answer me," he persisted, disregarding her request, "I'm not to be trifled with. Who gave it to you?"

"I refuse to tell you," she answered, defiantly. "Let go my arm ; you hurt me."

Tad only clutched her the tighter.

"Tell me !" he hissed.

She was squirming now under the grip he had upon her.

"You are bruising me," she cried angrily. "Stop it ! I shall be black and blue."

"Tell me !" he repeated, without relaxing his hold.

"I don't know ; it came without a card."

He pushed her from him, and she struck against a chair, and came near falling.

"O, how I hate you !" she shrieked, vehemently.

Tad laughed.

"You think you have found my successor," he said, still smiling.

"I don't know what you mean," she rejoined, sinking upon a sofa and pulling off her gloves.

"O, I saw it all," he pursued. "I saw the big dark man you were talking to."

Dolly was silent.

"I know him," he went on, "and you evidently know him, too."

"I never saw him until this afternoon," she replied, taking the pin from her hat.

Young Pemberton laughed again.

"I suppose," he said, "that you expect me to believe that! Now look here! I want to be very plain with you. I'm not going to go share and share alike with anybody, do you understand? I'm paying for these rooms, and I'm paying——"

"Stop!" she cried, passionately. "You haven't bought me! I'm not your slave! You don't own me: and, by God, you never will."

Her vehemence took Tad somewhat aback. Perhaps he was going too far. He had never seen her quite so independent. She was verging on the rebellious.

"I don't want you to pick up men in public places," he said.

Dolly made no response.

"I don't want you to accept presents from other fellows."

Still she was silent.

"As for that fellow, this afternoon," he went on, after a pause, "what do you think of him?"

"He was a gentleman," she answered, quickly,

“which is saying a good deal more than I can say for you.”

Tad ground his teeth in suppressed rage.

“I dare say,” he added; “I suppose he flattered you.”

Dolly did not reply.

“Well,” he pursued, “it pleases me that he should admire my taste. Be nice to him. You can, if you like, invite him to call here, but—” and he paused, “I must be behind that screen when he comes,” he concluded.

Miss Foster laughed now, in turn.

“Oh, must you?” she asked, in a way that young Pemberton did not altogether relish “How nice that will be!”

There was a rap at the door, and Tad, going to open it, found a waiter from the Bellevue with the dinner he had ordered. The meal was not a gay one. From the soup to the coffee, neither of the two participants spoke a word, and when it was finished, and the table with its tray of empty dishes had been moved to one side, Mr. Pemberton indicated that he was about to go.

“Remember what I told you,” he said. “Should I ever discover him here without your

having given me previous warning, I'm done with you."

Scarcely had he finished the sentence when once more there was the sound of knuckles on the door. It was the mulatto girl this time.

"A gem'man to see Miss Dolly," she said, "The same gem'man, he told me to say, what spoke to her dis yer af'ernoon."

"Tell him," hastened Dolly, in some perturbation, "that I am engaged; and ask him to call some other——"

"Tell him nothing of the sort," interrupted Tad, in his most commanding tone. "Tell him to come up. Miss Dolly will see him."

The young woman was about to persist, but Sally had gone.

Tad followed her into the hall and secured his overcoat and hat from the rack.

"He is not slow to press his advantage," he observed, as he came back, "I shall listen to your conversation, as I promised, from behind this screen."

He had just secreted himself, when Yorke entered.

CHAPTER IX

LETTERS OF IMPORTANCE

ON the Monday following the football game, Mrs. Yorke's morning mail, slipped through the slot in the door of her apartments, contained three communications of more than ordinary importance. As was her habit, she breakfasted late and alone, her husband having gone to his office two or three hours earlier. Her letters she carried with her to the breakfast room, and while she waited for her eggs and her coffee, she opened and read them. The contents of the first was gratifying. It was an invitation to Mrs. Brokaw's Tuesday Dances, and in it she saw an official acknowledgement that she had been admitted to the smart set of the town. The second partook of the nature of a revelation. It had been forwarded to her by her step-father in New York, unopened, and readdressed from Washington Square ; and in the original endorsement she saw her maiden name. The enclosure was closely written in an uncertain, faltering hand, as was the superscrip-

tion, and she was not a little surprised to discover that it was dated from Philadelphia, several days back.

It began with "My dear niece, Katherine," and it was signed "Your affectionate aunt, Katherine Rourke."

"It has been with some difficulty," it began "that I have discovered your whereabouts in New York. For a good many years—in fact, ever since your mother's second marriage—I have lost trace of you, and this I regret very much. I remember you very well as one of the sweetest, chubbiest babies I ever saw, and I thought I detected in you then, a resemblance to the portrait of my revered father's great aunt, after whom you and I were both named. There is a legend in the family, you know, that she jilted John Penn, a grandson of the founder. She was certainly a very beautiful woman. I am getting old now—very old—I hardly dare say how old I am; and they whisper that I am growing childish, which I imagine is quite true. Well, then, my dear, one of my childish fancies is to see you again. I don't suppose you will remember me at all, but I am your great aunt, and I loved your noble father, my nephew, very dearly. If you can arrange

to come to Philadelphia and visit me for a week or so, it will be a charity. I can make you very comfortable. I have a housekeeper and excellent servants, and you shall have a great room all to yourself. I won't ask you to sit with me more than an hour a day, and the rest of the time, I dare say, you can find plenty of amusement."

There was more of this, in the same vein, which Katherine hurried through, seeking for the place of residence of the writer. When, at last, she found the address, she was not quite sure as to the location. The street was not familiar to her, and so she called the colored waiter and enquired of him.

"Shackamaxon street," he replied, "yes'm—Shackamaxon street am up-town, ma'am—wery far up-town. What dey calls Fishtown, ma'am."

She thanked him, and after a moment's consideration asked him to call a coupé for her. The letter from her great aunt was a most pleasant surprise. Hitherto she had no idea that the city possessed any of her kin. The kindly old lady already seemed very near and dear to her, and she meant to lose no time in hunting her up, and renewing the acquaintance of her infancy.

The writing upon the third and last of her batch

of letters looked very much like the first endeavor of a child. The characters were correctly formed, but with evidences of considerable effort. Tearing open the envelope she drew forth a sheet of rough paper, bearing a dozen lines in the same style of chirography. Rude as the writing was, however, the matter possessed for her a startling interest. What she read was this :

“Your husband is untrue to you. He visits a woman on South Fifteenth street. If you want proof, it is easily to be had. Go to Caldwell’s store this afternoon, and tell them that Mr. Yorke wishes them to send the diamond sun burst that he ordered to the Salisbury, so that he can see it, before it is delivered. When a lover gives he demands—and much more than he has given.” It was signed “A Friend.”

Every word was a blow; and her brain reeled under the assault. She was seized with a sudden dizziness, accompanied by nausea. The *carafe* and the dish of fruit on the table seemed to be swinging around her. She was conscious of the negro waiter coming toward her, but he appeared to be a long way off, and very small, as objects that are seen through the large end of opera glasses.

“Hab some ice water, ma’am,” she heard some one saying, and mechanically she took the proffered glass and drank.

Then the *carafe* and the fruit stopped swinging, and she saw the waiter standing beside her.

“It was a momentary faintness,” she observed, aloud.

“Yes’m,” returned he, fancying that the remark had been addressed to him. “You was extraordinary pale, ma’am.”

“I don’t think I care for any breakfast, Jackson,” she continued, after a pause.

She rose, supporting herself by the table, and passed out to the elevator, with uncertain steps, her mind a prey to a thousand suspicions awakened by that miserable, ill-written, nameless note. When she reached her room she found the chambermaid there, but she scarcely noticed her. She threw herself down upon a couch in her boudoir, and gazed with wide eyes at the ceiling.

“After all, then,” she told herself, sadly, “it is true. I don’t think I ever really doubted him. I pretended that I did, and I couldn’t understand that business trip of his, but—O, I have always believed him, really, and I believed him this time, against any reason. But now—O, yes, this letter

must be true. No one would dare suggest such a proof, unless the proof were there. I hoped he was different from other men. I believed he was different. He has always been so good to me, so patient with me, and to think that—no, he is not false. I won't believe it. Anonymous letters are not worth considering. Everybody says that. I ought to tear it up, and forget about it—or, I ought to show it to him. Yes, that is it. I ought to show it to him, and tell him I don't believe a word of it. That would end all this misunderstanding between us, and make me happy again. Perhaps, after all, it is a blessing in disguise. It will bring back the old days. He will take me in his arms and kiss me, and tell me how foolish I was to doubt him, and explain all about why he went to New York, and who Nana is, and maybe he will be able to tell who wrote this; and then I will beg him to do nothing rash again, as he did—Ah! yes!"—a thought suddenly came to her—"it is from Mr. Pemberton. I am sure it is from Mr. Pemberton. He has disguised his hand. He wants to be revenged on New. But then, he must know that such a revenge would make me suffer, and he has always been very

nice to me. And beside, he has apologized to New, and——”

“There is a coupé at the door,” announced the chambermaid.

Mrs. Yorke sprang up. She had quite forgotten her great aunt.

“I’ll be down presently,” she said.

As she prepared for her drive, she continued to turn the subject over in her mind, and when she went out, she decided that she was still too much harassed and perplexed to think of visiting Shackamaxon street and Mrs. Rourke. The day was gray, cold and raw, with a promise of more rain, but she directed the coachman to drive to the Park and to keep on driving until she told him to turn back. She lowered the windows of the carriage, and the cool air upon her burning cheeks was very grateful. Her reasoning had taken another turn.

“If it is from Mr. Pemberton,” she argued to herself, “it must be an effort to prove that when he implied that that personal was not a business matter he was right and New was wrong. If that is so, I don’t wonder he is anxious to show that he was right.”

The cab was bowling out Locust street over the

asphaltum of that narrow thoroughfare, meeting all sorts and conditions of vehicles on the way.

“What is the use of proing and conning?” she said to herself, at last. “If I follow the instructions of the letter and find that there is no foundation for the charge, I shall know it is a cruel hoax. If I follow them and find that he is buying jewelry for some one else——” She leaned forward and thrust her head out of the window.

“Driver!” she called, “drive to Ninth and Chestnut streets.”

In front of the jewelry shop there were several carriages already drawn up, and Mrs. Yorke had a couple of pavements to cross. On entering the establishment she found all the clerks engaged. She was very nervous, and to wait made her more so. She pretended to examine a trayful of diamond rings in one of the cases, and standing thus, with her head bent, the words of a young woman beside her attracted her attention.

“You have the address, I suppose,” she heard her say, “South Fifteenth street; and you understand that the new one is to be sent there. The old one goes to Mr. Yorke, with the bill.”

The girl’s voice was loud and penetrating; there was no mistaking a single syllable. Mrs.

Yorke looked up hastily, a comely, fair-haired young woman, rather showily dressed. There was something familiar about her face, but Katherine could not remember where she had seen it before. The glimpse of her, however, was but momentary, for, having given her instructions, she flashed out of the store. Mrs. Yorke was trembling, from eyelid to ankle. Her knees smote each other ; and as she spoke her voice was uncertain.

“ Who was that ? ” she asked ; making her question as brief as possible.

The clerk was proud of his knowledge of celebrities.

“ You’ve seen her, I presume,” he said, without the faintest idea that he was speaking to the wife of the man the girl had just mentioned. “ She’s what they call a serio-comic singer—Dolly Foster. She sang here last winter, and last summer she was at one of the New York roof gardens. This winter she isn’t on the stage, I believe.”

“ And her golden hair was hanging down her back,” repeated Mrs. Yorke, without knowing that she was voicing aloud the words that had suddenly come to her, with a realization of the woman’s personality.

“ Yes, yes,” laughed the clerk, “ that is her

favorite song, I believe ; the one that she made such a success with."

Katherine made no reply. She stood gazing across the counter at the bric-à-brac on the shelves behind it.

"Is there anything I can show you?" asked the clerk.

She did not hear him. She was stunned by the blow that this corroboration of the letter had dealt her.

"I knew he liked her," she was repeating to herself. "I knew he liked her. I knew he admired her."

"Would you care to look at some of this Sèvres?" persisted the clerk, puzzled by the woman's expression.

Still she made no answer.

"We have some very pretty vases up stairs," he went on, "if you care to——"

She turned suddenly, before he had finished speaking, and walked out of the store. The driver of the coupé did not notice her as she made her exit, and after waiting two hours he returned to the stable. Katherine Yorke, meanwhile, was lying on the couch in her boudoir ; her eyes fixed on the ceiling.

CHAPTER X

A TARDY RESOLVE

IT was Horse Show week in New York, and Yorke determined to take Katherine over for a few days. That he should go was a necessity, and he was not inclined to add any more fuel to the flame of kindled suspicion by going alone. On his way up Chestnut street, about three o'clock, he stopped in at the jeweler's and procured the diamond ornament that had been left there by Dolly Foster in the morning. They had made a drawing of it, the salesman told him, and the copy could be executed without retaining the original any longer. With this tucked snugly away in his pocket he went home. He would hurry Katherine into a street gown, throw whatever was necessary into a steamer trunk, and by the aid of a cab he felt sure that the four o'clock train could be made very comfortably. That would get them over in time for dinner with his wife's people, and they would have a full evening at the Show. He was hopeful, too, that the trip

and the change of surroundings would tend to slacken the strained relations that had existed between Katherine and himself for the past six days.

For the elevator he was compelled to wait, and being in a hurry, and therefore a little impatient, he spoke rather sharply to the elevator boy—for which the youth managed, before the day was ended, to secure ample revenge. On reaching his room Yorke discovered that his wife was absent. He examined with some care the tablet, hanging by the dressing table in her boudoir, upon which she jotted down her social engagements, and found that she had noted thereon, for that afternoon, no less than four teas. Hence, to expect her in before six or seven, he realized, was to expect the improbable; and at that hour it would be folly to think of starting upon their journey.

“Well,” he said, resignedly, “we shall have to wait until to-morrow,” and changing his coat for a velvet lounging jacket, he lighted a cigar. Picking up one of the magazines he threw himself down upon a cushioned corner seat, luxurious with many bright-colored pillows, and began to read.

The article was no more exciting than the average magazine article of the present day. It was, in fact, quite as somniferous as any of its class, and in a little while the book had dropped from relaxed fingers, the cigar had fallen to the floor, strewing ashes as it went, and Yorke was sleeping soundly.

When he awoke dusk had fallen, and the room was in gloom. He had been dreaming, he remembered—a horrible, uncanny dream, in which he saw Katherine, standing knee-deep in muddy, slimy water, with reeds all about her, her fair hair loosed, stained with the black soil of the river bottom, and tangled with water weeds. But the most dreadful part of it was that, though standing, her face was ghastly white, and her blue eyes, wide open, wore the dull glaze of death. He sprang up and turned on the electric lights. The clock told him that it was a few minutes after five. He went through the other rooms, but Katherine had not returned. The dream had made a deep impression upon him. It was realism itself, and while he knew that the article which he had begun, concerning the character of Ophelia, had been largely responsible for it,

he could not completely free his mind from the influence of the vision.

If Katherine were home he might easily forget it. The living face would obliterate the dead dream face, but until he saw his wife again, he felt sure that he would be haunted by those pale, sad features, and especially by those staring, lifeless eyes. From a decanter on a dainty little buffet in his snugger he poured out some whiskey and drank it. He lighted a fresh cigar. He examined his wife's tablet again. The latest of the receptions, he saw, was from four to seven. It might be two hours yet before she returned. He picked up the magazine and tried to read, but the words had no meaning for him. He cast about for some means of killing time. A mirror into which he glanced told him that his hair would bear trimming. He descended to the barber shop. The barber was inclined to be loquacious, and he encouraged him, hoping for diversion. The hair cutter entered enthusiastically upon the story of the wife of one of his oldest customers having committed suicide.

"Yes, I know all about it," prevaricated Yorke, endeavoring to stop the gruesome tale.

"I've heard it from his own lips."

“Then maybe you know the cause?” suggested the wielder of the shears.

“No, I don’t,” answered Yorke, hoping thus to end the subject.

“Well, I do,” returned the other; “between ourselves, she was foolishly jealous of him. She suspected him without reason. A better man or more faithful husband never lived. Most of us have our little love affairs on the side, Mr. Yorke, but Mr.——”

“Just so,” interrupted Yorke, nervously, “He was all you say he was—not too short, Charley. I think that will do. Just give it a brush over, and I’ll be off. I’m in a hurry.”

The tale of suicide had been bad enough, but the cause was the last straw. Ordinarily it would not have affected him; but his dream had filled him with morbid fancies. On his way back to his rooms, he bought an evening paper at the newsstand, and in it he read the report of the coroner’s inquest. The woman, according to the testimony, had been unwarrantably suspicious. Her husband, conscious of his virtue, had refused to humor her by an explanation, and she had killed herself, leaving a note in which she said that he

would now be free to marry the person he preferred to her.

Thereupon Yorke immediately resolved that he would tell Katherine the whole story of his New York trip, and explain his visit to Dolly Foster. It was foolish of him, he argued, to risk lasting unhappiness for himself through a sentimental desire to shield others. He had no fear that his wife would follow the example of the wife of whom he had just read. She was not, he told himself, of that sort, but the picture beheld while he slept had aroused all that was fanciful and imaginative in his composition, and this dread of an intangible something, he knew not what, was the result. Now that his mind was made up to tell her everything, and do away with all misunderstanding, he was more anxious than ever for her return. He would meet her in the hallway and take her into his arms, and kiss her lips, through her veil ; and then he would insist that she should sit on his knee while he made his confession ; and, after that, she would kiss him, and tell him how sorry she was ever to have doubted him, and how unworthy she was of him, and what a dear, old, good husband he was, after all. And then, in the morning, they would go to New York and

have two or three enjoyable days at the Horse Show, where they would meet all their old friends, and they would be as fond and affectionate as the proverbial bride and bridegroom, and the people that knew them would point them out as a model example of what married life should be.

Under the spur of these virtuous resolves Yorke's spirits rose. He began to dress for dinner, and, as he got into his evening clothes, he whistled merrily, and his face took on a beatific expression that had been a stranger to it for weeks. As he finished tying his white bow, the clock tinkled seven, and he listened for the sound of the ascending elevator. He was sure that she would not be much longer, now. Presently his ear detected the murmur of the rising car. Then he heard the iron gate thrown back, and a second later he heard it close. He started into the hall, pushing his arms into the sleeves of his coat. And then—he stopped, disappointed. The door of the suite next to his had just shut with a slam.

He walked through the rooms once more, and lighted all the lamps, all the gas jets, and all the candles. There should be an illumination in honor of this event, he said. If he had only thought of it before he would have had some

flowers. It was too late now to get them. She might be in at any minute ; and messenger boys take such an endless time to go an errand. He sat down and turned the evening paper inside out, his ears astrain for the first indication of her coming. The ticking of the clock seemed magnified. It was as loud as the voice of a telegraph sounder. And how slowly it ticked ! He threw down the paper and watched the hands. But for the ticking he would have thought the clock had stopped. The minute hand seemed motionless.

Half-past seven ; and Katherine had not returned. Yorke walked to the hall door and opened it. The people that occupied the opposite apartment, were just coming down from dinner—husband and wife, together, and they were laughing. Yorke envied the man. He heard the elevator come up again, and he waited for it ; but it passed the floor without stopping. He went back to his rooms, which, in spite of all the light, seemed dreary. He lifted one of the drawing room windows and looked out. It was raining. The lights in the big buildings to the northeast gleamed dimly through the steady downpour. The gas lamps in the street below flickered dimly through the wet glass of their encasement. Um-

brellas moved in and out among the shadows, shielding pedestrians beneath them. A car went by with clanging bell. A cab drew up at the door, and some one got out ; but whether man or woman the striped awning, stretched across the sidewalk, prevented Yorke from seeing.

“That must be she,” he said to himself, pulling down the window and going to where, through the long, narrow hall, he could see her shadow, should she come, against the ground-glass panel of the door. He waited for minutes ; but not even her shadow rewarded him.

At eight o'clock he rang for a waiter and sent up his order for dinner. She would surely be home in a minute or two, now, he concluded, and the dinner might as well be ready to be served when she came. Again he tried to read the paper, and again he failed. He put on his hat and went down to the ground floor ; where, for ten minutes, he walked back and forth through the great white-marble-floored lobby and entrance hall. People came in and people went out, but the one face that he looked for did not appear. He went to the street door, and stood out under the awning. He watched every approaching cab expectancy, only to meet repeated disappoint-

ment, as it passed without leaving the car tracks.

At half-past eight he returned to his rooms, and on his way up enquired of the elevator boy to whom he had spoken so sharply a few hours before, at what time Mrs. Yorke had gone out.

"I don't remember her, sir," answered the lad.

And when Yorke had alighted and the boy was on his way down again, the aggressive youth smiled a glad smile of satisfied revenge, and said to himself: "Did I see her? Well, I guess. Didn't I hand her grip out to her, when she got out of the car! But I wouldn't tell *him*. He's too fresh, he is."

Of the names and addresses of the women whose teas Yorke imagined his wife would have attended he now made a mental note, and without stopping to mention that he would not require the dinner he had ordered, he started out, clad in a mackintosh and slouch hat, to trace if possible his missing spouse. Under ordinary circumstances he would have concluded that she had stopped at one or another of these houses for dinner—possibly at the Pembertons'—but such an idea now, in his somewhat warped condition, did

not present itself. He refused to wait while a cab was telephoned for, but walked through the rain to a neighboring livery stable and there secured a coupé.

As chance would have it, it was the same coupé and the same driver that had waited for Mrs. Yorke for two hours that morning, and had returned without her, but the husband knew nothing of that, and neither the stableman nor the driver deemed it worth while to tell him.

At the residence of Mrs. Cadwalader-Beech on West Spruce street, Yorke could learn nothing. His wife had not, so far as remembered, been present. There was a great crush, and it was possible that she had been there but the butler did not recall her. Mrs. Cadwalader-Beech, herself, was dining out, and Miss Beech was indisposed. Miss Logan, who lived at Eighteenth and Pine streets, had received from four until six, but Mrs. Yorke, she regretted very much, had not called.

“Is there anything wrong?” she asked Yorke, as he stood in the hall, hat in hand; “I hope there is no ill news for her. You can rely upon me, you know. It would never go further; and if I can be of any assistance——” and she wagged

her crown of false hair to say that it would be a pleasure.

"No," returned Yorke, with a tact that under the circumstances was remarkable, "no; nothing wrong. I am called away, that is all; and I want to see Mrs. Yorke particularly, before I go."

"So sorry!" ambiguously commented Miss Logan, with evident disappointment.

Yorke called at the Pembertons' last. The idea that his wife might be dining there had just come to him, and he felt rather ashamed of himself for his anxiety as he mounted the steps. The rain had turned into a flood. It was coming down in gushes; and Rittenhouse Square, opposite, in spite of its many lamps, resembled a dark waste of woodland.

"Is Mrs. Pemberton in?" asked Yorke, of the man in livery who answered the bell.

"No sir," he answered, "she's gone to the theatre with Mr. Pemberton; but Mr. Thaddeus is at home, sir."

"Ah! Well, never mind then. Mrs. Yorke didn't dine here to night, did she?"

"No, sir. There were no guests, except the ladies who received with Mrs. Pemberton, this afternoon, sir."

“Was Mrs. Yorke at the reception?”

“No, sir; I believe not, sir. Leastwise I heard Mrs. Pemberton say at dinner that she wondered whether Mrs. Yorke could be ill, sir.”

Anxiety is the mother of most monstrous apparitions, and Yorke was now really alarmed. He left word that he would call on Mr. Pemberton after the play; and ordered the driver to seek the nearest telegraph office. It had just occurred to him that Katherine might possibly have gone to her mother in New York, though it seemed odd that she should have taken such a step without giving him any previous intimation and without leaving any word for him. Having despatched his telegram, he drove back to the Salisbury to wait for an answer, and hoping against hope that he should find his wife there. But she had not returned. If he could obtain no tidings of her in New York, he must seek counsel with Mr. Pemberton, who was the man he knew best in Philadelphia, and determine upon some course of action. The situation certainly began to look very grave.

Nor was there any relief when, shortly before midnight, a boy brought the reply to his message, couched in these words, and signed by his wife's

step-father : “ Katherine not here. Wire at once what is the matter.”

Yorke hastened to Pemberton with the fixed idea that his only course was to lay the mystery immediately before the police department ; but Mr. Pemberton did not agree with him.

“ Impossible ! ” he said, decisively, “ the whole affair would get into the newspapers, and you might have serious cause to regret your precipitancy. As yet, you know nothing. There are a thousand places to which your wife may have gone. It is possible that she stayed somewhere for dinner, and that on account of the rain she decided to stop all night.”

The husband did not think such an explanation probable. He feared that she had met with some accident. After a half hour’s argument, however, he agreed to wait until morning before going to the City Hall. If she did not return by ten o’clock at the latest, he would set the machinery of the municipal detective bureau at work to find her. Mr. Pemberton urged a private detective agency in preference, but Yorke was not to be moved.

It was after two o’clock when he reached home, and on opening his door, his eye fell upon a

square envelope lying on the floor of the narrow hall. He picked it up eagerly. The address was in Katherine's familiar hand.

CHAPTER XI

OUT OF THE WORLD.

SHACKAMAXON Street is rich in contrasts. It is a wide thoroughfare, with broad, red-brick sidewalks, and a paved roadway, bisected by car tracks; yet, here and there, gaunt trees stretch their arms over board fences from enclosed gardens, and the cackle of hens and the crowing of chanticleers mingle with the hoarse piping of tugboats on the river, not far away, and with the shrill scream of shifting engines in the freight yards. Modern mansions of brown stone, three stories in height, frown down upon little old-fashioned frame cottages, and great red-brick houses with lace curtains at the windows jut up against boiler-shops and board yards. It is a stubborn old street that has fought long and hard against the invasion of neoteric improvement; and is gradually getting the worst of the battle. In the past it harbored many well to-do people, with snug fortunes invested in sailing vessels—a sixteenth interest in this schooner, a thirty-second

interest in that brig, and a sixty-fourth in some barkentine that sailed to the antipodes. Some of these folks still dwell there, though the shipping interests have long since departed from the neighborhood, and their money has gone into real estate and the stock of street car lines.

Michael Rourke, whose double brick house was not far from a boiler shop on one hand and a tree-canopied chicken yard on the other, had made a fortune, as fortunes went in those days, in the business of ship-brokerage. He had left it well-invested, and his widow in the twenty years since his death, had seen it double and treble in value. She still lived in the great brick house, with its old-fashioned furniture. She had no companions save her servants; which included now and then a trained nurse—for she suffered from chronic rheumatism that at intervals reduced her to almost utter helplessness. Though she had celebrated her eighty-first birthday, her faculties were still acute. But for the rheumatism that crippled her, she was remarkably well preserved. She had come into her second sight, and could read without the aid of glasses; and she read much. Her mind was wonderfully clear, and her youth and its happenings were to her so

many pages of large, legible type. Her family and its history were a garden in which she loved to ramble, and to her nurses her conversation was as entertaining as a romance, and made as lasting an impression. It was in the course of one of these excursions into the region of recollection that her great-niece was recalled, and the letter to Katherine was the direct result.

"I wonder," she said, one damp, chill November afternoon, as the housemaid put coal on the grate fire in the large second story front room, before a window of which the old lady sat in an invalid chair, "I wonder if Miss Van Vrancken will come! I suppose she thinks me a tiresome old woman, and imagines that she would have a very dull time of it here. But she might at least write to me. Isn't it nearly time for the letter-carrier, Ellen? It has been a week now, since I wrote her."

As she spoke the sound of the door-bell ringing came to her ears.

"Ah!" she went on, "that is perhaps a letter from her, now."

Ellen put down the coal-scuttle and descended the stairs to answer the bell; and old Mrs. Rourke sat silently, and with some little impatience,

awaiting her return. When she came back it was with a card.

"A lady to see you, Mrs. Rourke," she said.

Mrs. Rourke reached eagerly for the card ; but when she read the name her face told her disappointment.

"Mrs. Newland Yorke," she repeated, aloud. "What does she want of me, Ellen? Tell her I am not able to see her."

"She says," replied the girl, "that she is your niece, that——"

"Why didn't you say so?" cried the old lady, impatiently. "Why didn't you say so? Show her up here, at once. Dear me! To think of that child being married!"

The meeting between the two women was a trifle hysterical. For old Mrs. Rourke it was an event so far aside from her usual routine that her nerves were at their greatest tension, and as she rose to her feet and embraced her niece, whose beauty appeared to her hermit eyes, something almost divine, she shed tears of ebullient joy. As for Katherine, who was already much overwrought when she arrived, the meeting was the resultant orgasm of a nerve-racking day. She buried her head on her aunt's shoulder, and wept

until her eyes were red and swollen, and until the good woman that stood feebly supporting her and trying to pacify her, became apprehensive for her niece's sanity, knowing no other cause for her nervous excitement save this meeting with a hitherto unknown kinswoman.

The tears were to Mrs. Yorke a grateful relief. For two hours she had been lying dry-eyed upon the couch in her boudoir, staring at the blue circles in the ceiling paper, while a thousand problems, suspicions, fears, and plans chased one another through her actively-working brain. Out of all this she had come dazed, yet with one object: to seek the haven of her aunt's house, which had been so opportunely offered. She had enquired her way of the druggist at the corner, and had received subsequent instructions from the conductor of the car that she had been advised to take. The neighborhoods through which she passed were as new to her as a strange country, and as interesting. The trip had for the time diverted her mind from the one trouble that oppressed it, but the meeting with Mrs. Rourke had suddenly brought it all back to her, and the suddenness with which it came, coupled with a new sentiment, born of the old lady's avowed and

evident affection, tore her heart strings to ribbons, and her tears flowed in a freshet.

“You must think me a very silly girl, auntie, dear,” she said at last, between sobs, as she dried her eyes on a tiny bit of a cambric, “but you don’t know every thing.”

“I’m sure I don’t, my darling,” replied Mrs. Rourke, with a kindly smile. “Sit down, my dear, and let me look at you. As a child, you know—as a baby, I mean—we thought we detected such a resemblance in you to the Katherine Lawrence: as I wrote you. But you have grown much prettier.”

Katherine sat down in a chair that Ellen had placed for her near that of her aunt, and Mrs. Rourke resumed her seat at the window.

“And so you are married!” she pursued. “I hope you are very happy with your husband, my dear.”

Whereupon Katherine began to weep afresh; and then she told old Mrs. Rourke the whole story: How she had been deceived; how she had discovered it; and, finally, how she had run away without leaving a word behind her, and how she had come to her for refuge. The story was punctuated with sobs, but as it drew to its close

the narrator's pique increased with the sympathy of her auditor; her tears were heated by indignation, and the spirit of revenge rose above a more tender sentiment. Mrs. Rourke was very sorry; and she said so. She had been married herself, she told her niece, and knew what jealousy was. "But," she added, "we are never really so happy nor so unhappy as we fancy."

"As for jealousy, my dear, it is a worm," she pursued, sagely, "and a very nasty, poisonous worm. It thrives on falsehood as well as on truth. The only worm of the kind I ever had any experience with, fed upon falsehood, and for years it played havoc not only with my own heart, but with your uncle's as well. I accused him unjustly—appearances, you know, are somewhat as injurious as faults—and he, conscious of his innocence, was necessarily resentful. Had it been truth that it fed upon, we might have killed it long before we did, and ended its poisonous ravages."

"I would much prefer that this worm fed upon falsehood," replied Katherine, quite calmly now that all the milk of human kindness within her had been embittered by the recital of her wrongs. "In that case I should never have permitted it

to trouble me. You see, auntie, I *know* that it is the truth."

Old Mrs. Rourke smiled.

"I thought so too, dear," she said; "I remember that when I heard the story about your uncle, I felt as though I had lost all my wisdom teeth at one pull."

Then Katherine was shown to her room; a great wide, cheerful third-story front, over that of her aunt, with dainty paper of wild rose pattern on the wall, and a big, high-post bedstead. There was a dressing table draped in filmy white material over pink, and a washstand with an old-fashioned water jug and basin, and in one corner a huge chest of drawers of solid mahogany that had evidently been in the family for generations. There she found that Ellen, by Mrs. Rourke's orders, had deposited her somewhat heavy hand-satchel, and by means of a silk waist that it contained, she effected a change of toilet.

When she returned to her aunt, the old lady had something more to say to her.

"My dear," she suggested, "if I were in your place, I should send a note to my husband. You tell me that you came away without telling him

where you were going. Two wrongs, you know, do not make a right."

"But I do not want him to know where I am," replied Katherine, determinedly, "and I do not propose to tell him."

"Of course," continued Mrs. Rourke, "I do not wish to appear dictatorial, and you know your own affairs best, my dear; but it seems to me, that if that is your object, you are going in precisely the wrong way to accomplish it."

"I do not understand you."

"Don't you suppose your husband will endeavor to find you?"

"I'm sure he will."

"And don't you suppose that he will be able to trace you here?"

"He will never think of such a thing. He does not know of your existence."

Mrs. Rourke did not press the subject further. In a little while the lights were lit, and at six o'clock Katherine assisted her aunt down stairs to the dining room, where a cold supper was served. For two hours and over, after supper, she chatted with the old lady over matters of family history, and told her of her step-father, and of her step-brothers and step-sisters in New York.

“My eldest step-brother, Alan,” she said, in conclusion, “is as good and generous as he can be, but father has a notion that he is a little fast, you know, and frowns on him. He has been away for two or three years, traveling. He is a handsome fellow—awfully handsome. He graduated from Yale—or rather he went there for three years, and then—well, to tell you the truth, I don’t think father could afford to keep him there any longer.”

Old Mrs. Rourke retired usually, she said, at nine, but on this occasion she sent the housemaid away when she came to assist her, and said she would sit up a half hour longer.

“I have been thinking,” she said to Katherine, when Ellen had disappeared, “that, after all, my dear, you had better send word to your husband. Suppose he should report your disappearance to the police. Wouldn’t it be in the *Ledger* in the morning? You don’t want notoriety of this kind, I am sure.”

But Katherine did not think there was any likelihood of Newland’s taking such a step. He would deplore the notoriety as much as she, and would hesitate a long while before adopting the course suggested. When, however, she had bid-

den her aunt good-night and returned to her room, with its wild-rose wall paper and high-post bedstead, she began to think the matter over more seriously. For an hour she sat with folded hands, pondering, her fancies growing more and more vivid with every heart-beat. The idea of the police looking for her, filled her with a vague alarm. She had never had anything to do with the police in all her life; they were strange, horrible creatures to her; things of another world from hers, and should an officer call at the house and enquire for her, she was sure that she should die from fright. After due deliberation she changed her mind and resolved to send a note to the Salisbury in the morning. If Newland was worried about her over night, it would do no harm. He might, she argued, begin to value the prize that he had disregarded for a bleached singer of risqué songs.

The day had been a trying one to her, and, now that the excitement was passed, an irresistible drowsiness assailed her. When, having undressed and donned her nightgown, she knelt as usual at the bedside to say her prayers, sleep interrupted her petitions, and, sleeping, she dreamed. Presently she awoke with a cry.

“No! No!” she was shrieking, “No! No!”

She had fancied that Newland had sent a policeman after her, and that the officer was dragging her half-clad through the street. When she rose from her knees and looked at her watch, she found that an hour had sped. It was nearly midnight. The terror of her dream was still with her, and the haunting fear of a burly man in uniform with a muscular clutch upon her wrist, was not to be shaken off. After all, she told herself, her aunt was right : she must send word to her husband ; and she must send it at once. Perhaps the servants were not yet in bed. She would get one of them to take a note to the nearest messenger office. She opened her chamber door. The house was dark as a pit, and as silent.

She dressed herself, hurriedly, putting on her hat and her jacket. Then, taking some matches, she stole silently, tremblingly down stairs. On the second floor she found a door open, and, striking a light, looked in, hoping that it might be a library, and that she would there discover pen, ink and paper ; but it was a spare sleeping room. In the parlor she searched a desk for writing material, but in vain. For a brief space she was hopeless, and then, suddenly, recalled the fact that

should she find a messenger office, she would find also the means to write the message.

With great care, lest she should make a noise and disturb the sleeping household, she unlocked the street door, and opened it. The rain came dashing against her face, blown by a fierce north-east wind. She stepped back, and, groping about the vestibule, found an umbrella. Then she carefully adjusted the night-latch, and, raising the umbrella, started out into the black, wet night.

At the corner she was fortunate enough to encounter a messenger boy, who showed her the way to the office to which he was returning. On the sheet of yellow paper that was offered her she scribbled these words: "Don't trouble to find me. I am stopping with a friend." And she signed it with her full name.

CHAPTER XII

THE LADY IN THE BROUGHAM

KATHERINE YORKE'S life at the Rourke homestead was necessarily a quiet one. She had much time to think about, and her aunt, she found, was fond of what she herself called "meditation"—a habit that had doubtless tended not a little to her lasting mental vigor. For hours at a time they sat together, exchanging remarks only at long intervals, each deeply absorbed in her own reflections. The result of Katherine's brooding over her imagined wrongs was what she believed to be a steady growth in indifference, rather than bitterness, toward her husband. At the end of a fortnight she had begun to fancy that she had become utterly regardless of him, and congratulated herself upon having attained that desired end. Whether or not he had endeavored to find her, she did not know, and—since, if he had, he had been unsuccessful—did not care. In a week or two more she would return to him—she realized that there was no other course open to her—but

he would hardly recognize her, she told herself, as the wife he had known. An icicle would shed a grateful warmth in comparison with the chill that would be imparted by her manner. She more than ever made up her mind to throw herself with all her heart and soul into society. Since the pleasures of domesticity were denied her, she determined to seek all the gayer pleasures that were offered by the social whirligig. The economies that she had practiced out of consideration for her husband's straightened circumstances, she resolved to practice no longer. She would afford him an idea of the extent of the extravagances in which a woman can indulge when she gives her whole mind to the subject. She would devote whatever time and mental effort she might have to spare from her task of running up enormous bills to arousing her husband's jealousy. In spite of her imagined indifference, she was still smarting under the stunning blow that had been dealt her devoted and unselfish love; and from the abrasions and bruises inflicted upon her pride; and in these resolutions, she found the most soothing balm.

Mrs. Rourke seldom spoke to her of Newland, but, when she did, it was to urge her not to exag-

gerate her wrongs, and to strive to overlook, as far as possible, what might after all be by no means so terrible as it appeared to her. On these points Katherine very shrewdly refused to argue. She formed her plans, unaided by her aunt, and formulated her resolves in secret. When she talked to the old lady, it was usually about her progenitors, and the stories that were told her by her octogenarian relative, were often a welcome relief from the monotone of her own thoughts. In this way she learned much concerning the ancestress after whom both she and her aunt were named, not the least interesting stories being how she jilted John Penn, the grandson of the founder, and how she and other gentlewomen had inaugurated these now time-honored gatherings, the Philadelphia Assemblies.

“I have all the old letters to prove this,” the old lady would say; “I wish I could show them to you, they are stored away somewhere in boxes in the garret, and the garret is inches deep in dust.”

One day, during the third week of her sojourn, a brougham drew up at the door. On the box were a coachman and footman in green livery, and the harness of the horses, she observed, was

ilver-mounted. On the short olive green blankets, technically known as "kidney covers," she described the initials, C. B.

"Oh, auntie," she called, excitedly, "who are your howling swell friends?"

Mrs. Rourke peered from her window, but was unable to make out the personality of her visitors. As it proved, there was a single caller, an elderly woman, wrapped in furs.

Ellen brought up the card, and after Mrs. Rourke had looked at it, she turned it over to her niece, remarking that she did not recall the name.

"Mrs. Cadwalader-Beech!" exclaimed Katherine. "What on earth does she want? Why, you know, auntie dear, she is one of the most fashionable women in Philadelphia society."

"I never heard of her," returned her aunt, a little captiously. "The name of Cadwalader is familiar, of course. We once had a gardener called that; but the only Beeches I know are the tree and the street," and she smiled at her own effort at wit. "Perhaps, my dear," she continued, "you had better go down to see her."

Katherine hesitated. She feared for an instant that it might be a message from her husband.

And yet she could hardly fancy that Mrs. Cadwalader-Beech would stoop to such a service.

“For whom did she ask, Ellen?” she enquired, still studying the card.

“For Mrs. Rourke, ma’am.”

Katherine stood before the mirror for a moment, adjusting the collar of her silk waist, and smoothing her light brown hair.

“I will see her,” she said, and Ellen descended with the message.

In the stately old drawing room, Katherine discovered the great lady of her acquaintance, standing near a window, gazing out through the green venetian blinds at her horses and her coachman. In such a neighborhood she could not bring herself to sit down, and she kept as much out of the house as was in her power, being of necessity in it.

At the sound of Katherine’s rustling skirts, she turned.

“Mrs. Rourke!” she said; for the moment unable to distinguish in the dim light of the room the features of the woman who approached her.

“No; not Mrs. Rourke,” rejoined Katherine, “Mrs. Newland Yorke.”

“Ah! Yes! So it is,” Mrs. Cadwalader-Beech

admitted. "My eyes were dimmed from looking into the sunlight. It is a surprise," she added.

"Not more so than this visit," returned Katherine, smiling. "Won't you be seated?"

Mrs. Cadwalader-Beech ignored the invitation.

"It was Mrs. Rourke I called to see," she began, "I did not expect——"

"No, of course not. But Mrs. Rourke is indisposed. I am her niece."

"Ah!" and there was a suggestion of a delighted discovery in the exclamation, mingled with a promise of growing frigidity.

"May I ask to what my aunt is indebted for this visit?" questioned Katherine, a little nettled.

"I came," began Mrs. Cadwalader-Beech, "to ask the address of a trained nurse that she is in the habit of employing—Miss Youmans. Can you give it to me?"

The tone in which the question was asked was chilling, and Mrs. Yorke resented it.

"I have never heard of her," she answered, not less coldly.

"Then I should like you to enquire of your—aunt," continued the caller. It was a command, rather than a request, delivered as it might have been to a servant.

“My aunt,” returned Katherine, with all the dignity that she could command, “I have already told you, is indisposed. I should not think of disturbing her. As for myself: I am very much engaged.”

Mrs. Cadwalader-Beech realized that she had been tactless. She had come much out of her way on this mission, and had no notion of returning with it unfulfilled.

“Might I ask you then,” she began in a conciliatory tone, “to find it out at your leisure, and forward it to me? My daughter, Mildred—you know her, I think—is very ill, and your aunt’s nurse was recommended to me, very highly. Dr. Lewis suggested her. It was he that told me I could get her address here. He is, I suppose you know, your aunt’s physician.”

“No, I did not know,” Katherine replied, “I am sorry to hear of your daughter’s illness.”

“She is very ill,” repeated Mrs. Cadwalader-Beech, and her voice trembled as she recalled the girl’s suffering, “desperately ill, in fact. O, Mrs. Yorke, you do not know how anxious I am about her!”

The maternal instinct in Katherine, in spite of the fact that she was herself childless, was de-

cidedly keen. Instinctively she put herself in her visitor's place, and while still smarting under the insolence of her manner, she sympathized with her anxiety, and the impulse to aid her got the better of her resentment.

"I will see if I can get the address for you," she said at last, and hurried off upstairs.

When she returned she found that Mrs. Cadwalader-Beech was still standing. She handed her a slip of paper on which she had written the street and number.

"You know nothing of Miss Youmans?" the visitor enquired of her, after thanking her.

"Nothing."

"I hope she is discreet," she added, half to herself; but Katherine made no reply. Mrs. Cadwalader-Beech said good afternoon and withdrew, and the younger woman made no move to follow her to the door. When she had gone Katherine stood for a moment, buried in thought.

She was wondering whether from this incident there might come to her husband's ears a knowledge of her whereabouts. She had been very well contented for the past few weeks, and her isolation had brought to her the peace that she most desired. She hoped that Newland would

not come there to disturb it. She did not care to see him, and she had no wish to return to the Salisbury until she was quite ready. Her present life was a restful relief, and her object was to prolong it, for a little while at least. She heard Mrs. Cadwalader-Beech's carriage drive away, and as she still stood, immersed in contemplation of the recent changes in her life, the sound of the jangling door bell came to her ears.

She started to go upstairs, passing Ellen in the hall, on her way to the door. On the first step of the stairway, she paused and waited to ascertain the identity of the caller. She was nervous and apprehensive; a sudden fear had taken possession of her, and as she waited and watched, her hand trembled on the banister.

The door opened; and, framed in the opening, she saw the tall spare figure of a man. The light was at his back, and his features were in shadow, and unrecognizable at the distance, but his outline was familiar. Katherine's heart gave a great leap, as though it would escape from her body, and then fell back, fluttering weakly. She grasped the banister rail with all her strength and tried to pull herself up the stairs; but everything had suddenly grown dark before her; and a sound

like the rushing of many waters was in her ears. The darkness increased ; the sound died away to a far-off murmur ; and when, a second later, Ellen came back through the hall with the gentleman's card, it was to find Mrs. Yorke lying limp and lifeless upon the lower steps of the stairway.

CHAPTER XIII

ADVICE: PROFESSIONAL AND OTHERWISE

WHEN Katherine found her way back to consciousness, it was to discover that she was lying on one of the long, hair-cloth sofas in the parlor, and that a gentleman whom she had never seen before was sitting beside her, with a bottle of smelling salts in his hand. He was a very handsome man, with an olive skin, and a heavy drooping mustache ; but what Katherine observed particularly were his eyes, which were, it seemed to her, the tenderest, most sympathetic, and most beautiful into which she had ever looked. They were large, dark brown, and long lashed as a woman's. She noticed too, that he was extremely well-dressed, and when the odor of the salts that was still in her nostrils, departed, it gave place to a delicate scent of orris, which the man at her side seemed to exhale. Gradually a recollection of the opening door and the figure within it, broke in upon her, and with it, came the realization that she had fainted, and that she had been recalled to consciousness by the stranger at her side.

"You are all right again, now, I think," he was saying, in a voice that was like a caress.

"Yes, thank you," Mrs. Yorke returned, sitting up hurriedly, rather ashamed of her plight, "quite right again."

"I am Mrs. Rourke's physician," continued her companion, with a smile, "fortunately I just happened in, in time."

In the doorway, Katherine saw Ellen standing, and in her desire for information she permitted the doctor's introduction to go unheeded. The girl's face wore an expression of relief from anxiety.

"Ellen," she called, "where is Mr. Yorke?"

"Mr. Yorke!" repeated the girl.

"Yes. He called, just as I—fainted. You let him in, did you not? Where is he?"

The girl looked dazed, and, for a moment, made no answer. The doctor smiled; and the smile enlightened her.

"It was Dr. Lewis," said Ellen.

Katherine sighed. The situation was freed from its embarrassment by the comfort that the news brought her.

"How stupid of me!" she said, smiling.

The doctor made no allusion to the incident,

“It was nervousness,” he continued; “your face and neck were suffused. Had you remained unconscious a moment longer, I should have had mustard plasters on the soles of your feet.”

He looked at her critically for a brief space, with one eye half closed—a professional perlustration.

“Your nerves have undergone a good deal of a strain of late,” he concluded; “will you allow me to write you a prescription?”

“I shall be delighted,” she answered.

“I understand you are making something of a visit to your aunt?” he went on, as he drew a small tablet from his pocket, and began to write.

“Yes, I have been here over a fortnight.”

“I should fancy such a household very restful for the nerves. Mrs. Rourke is a delightful old lady, but I cannot imagine much excitement in the daily routine of her home.”

“It is charming here,” Katherine replied. She detected the delicate method of his invitation for enlightenment as to the cause of her indisposition, but she was in no mood to take him into her confidence.

“Pardon me!” he pursued, still writing, and with his eyes still fixed upon the paper. “You

have recently suffered an affliction. Your present nervous condition tells me that, more effectively than any words you could employ."

Mrs. Yorke was silent. She was half inclined to laugh and half inclined to cry. His interest in her touched the pathetic side of her nature, and his tactful efforts at inducing a confession from her, appealed to her sense of humor. Between the two silence was the middle ground, and on this she took a position.

From her aunt, when the man of medicine had gone, she learned that he was one of the most fashionable physicians in the city—Dr. Dayton Lewis, of whom she had heard frequently, but whom she had never before seen. And then she fell to wondering whether, after all, it was she that had been outwitted; whether he knew about her disappearance, and more than half understood the reason, while she sat there fancying that he was groping blindly in the field of chance speculation.

On the second day after this visit, Mrs. Rourke was taken suddenly ill, and Dr. Lewis was sent for, at once. He came promptly, and relieved Katherine's anxiety by telling her that such attacks were of periodical occurrence with the old

lady, and that she had never failed to rally quickly under treatment. He had found Mrs. Yorke much perturbed, and he had soothed her in such gentle fashion, that she was won by his delicacy and sympathy.

“Your nerves are still far from right,” he observed, as he was about to go, “and this little affair has not done them any good. Have you been taking my medicine?”

Katherine looked into his great, kindly, brown eyes, and laughed.

“No,” she answered, frankly.

He seemed a little hurt, rather than angry.

“And why not?” he asked, simply. “Had you no confidence in me?”

“O, yes,” she answered, still smiling, “but—you will think me very foolish, if I tell you.”

“I think you very unkind, already,” he said.

They were standing in the hall at the foot of the stairs, where she had fainted two days before. It was in the afternoon, and the gas not having yet been lighted, the hall was in semi-darkness.

“No, I am not that,” she protested, “but—I fancied you knew more about me, and why I am here, than you intimated, and it made me angry, and I tore up the prescription, in spite,”

"Which was very, *very* wrong of you."

"I know it was."

"I'm afraid you are given to that sort of thing."

"To what sort of thing?"

"To jumping at conclusions, and acting upon them."

"Why?"

"I think that is the cause of your present exile."

"Then you do know," she cried, almost exultantly, "I knew you did."

"But I did not know when I was here before," he rejoined, "I heard some gossip at the club last night, and I put two and two together. I can tell you one thing, Mrs. Yorke—You are making a mistake."

"Thank you!"

"You may consider it impertinent of me to offer the suggestion," he continued, "and I dare say it is, but I repeat, that you are making a mistake. When men get to discussing the private affairs of a man and his wife in the clubs, it is time that something should be done to quiet their wagging tongues."

“ I quite agree with you,” she replied, “ but in this case it is not I that should do it.”

“ You think your husband is in error ? ”

“ Undoubtedly.”

“ Well then, you should go to him, and tell him so.”

“ You do not know what you suggest,” she said, with much feeling. “ You do not know how he has wronged me. It is not an easy thing for a woman to have her pride trodden upon, and after it has been so treated to leave it lying in the dirt, and to go on just as if she had never possessed it.”

Dr. Lewis made no answer. He stood looking at her in the half light of the wide hallway. She was very beautiful ; her indignation had flushed her cheeks with color, and her eyes sparkled with the fire of her resentment. He reached forward, took her hand, and pressed it tenderly.

“ I know,” he said, kindly ; “ I know how you feel, and you have all my sympathy. I do say that you have not had cause for all you have done—at least I am sure that you think you have—but, at the same time, it will be better that you go back to your husband, and to go back at once.”

There was something in his voice that com-

manded obedience. Such advice from any other person, Katherine would have rebelled against, but from this man whom she had known only two days she accepted it as a favor. She prized his consideration and craved his interest. The touch of his hand thrilled her. The pink in her face came and went again. Her gaze fell. She did not dare to look at him, lest he discover the effect he had upon her, an effect she was loath to admit even to herself.

"I want you to go back," he repeated, pleadingly. "Not for his sake so much, as for your own. Will you promise me?"

"I do not want to go," she answered, with eyes still lowered. "I—I do not think I should go, while Mrs. Rourke is so ill."

"That does not enter into it," he added, firmly; "your aunt has a nurse who is fully capable. She does not require you, and your husband does. Your first duty, you know, is to him."

"I owe him nothing," Katherine cried, the suggestion rousing her indignation, "I owe him less than nothing. I hate him."

Her anger had betrayed her into a confession that she would gladly have recalled, had it been possible,

“Go back to him,” repeated the doctor; “loving or hating, go back to him. I want you to give me your word that you will do as I ask.” His voice was low, but his utterance was weighted with determined purpose.

To refuse, Katherine felt, was impossible. Whatever he had bidden her to do at that moment she would have done. In some magic way he seemed to have woven a spell about her from which she could find no escape, and wished none.

“I will go,” she said, simply.

“When?” he asked.

“Tomorrow.”

He pressed her hand as to thank her, and then released it. When she looked up, the street door had closed after him.

CHAPTER XIV

HUSBAND AND WIFE

YORKE, meanwhile, had been much perturbed.

The brief note that he had received at the climax of his agitation over his wife's unexplained absence, changed his anxiety to anger. To him its real motive was unknown. He fancied, of course, that it was an outgrowth of Katherine's brooding over his visit to New York, and the stupidly blundering "personal" in the *Herald*. But what most perplexed him, was the refuge that she had chosen. Her acquaintances in Philadelphia were few, and as he mentally went over the list he could think of no one in whom she would be likely to confide, and under whose roof she would seek shelter. Just here a chance thought came to him of convents, such as he had read of in books. He recalled that some one had once said—"Women love always; when earth slips from them, they take refuge in heaven," but he knew little of convents outside of romance, and did not believe that his wife knew more. To

make enquiry among his friends would excite the very suspicion that he most wished to avoid. He now regretted even the telegram that he had sent to New York. It would require explanation. He regretted his consultation with Mr. Pember-ton for the same reason, and, most of all, he deplored his visit to Miss Logan. From that quarter a whisper would undoubtedly go forth, and with Mrs. Yorke's absence to give it color, what might not be said?

He set himself to work to devise a plausible story, but found this by no means easy, hampered as he was by his own utter ignorance of his wife's whereabouts. At length, however, he decided to tell enquirers at home that Mrs. Yorke had been called suddenly to New York to the bedside of a dying relative; and to advise the family in New York that the cause of his anxiety was her unexpected absence from home, the result of an errand of mercy to the house of a friend who was very ill.

This latter tale he told the next day in Gotham with as clever a semblance of truthfulness as was possible for a man that detested falsehood. And on the day following—for he returned without so much as looking in at the Horse Show—he re-

heard the other story, with a little more effrontery, born of the success of the first effort, to Mr. Pemberton.

Each morning and each afternoon he looked for some additional tidings of his absent wife, but nothing came, and, after two days, he began to grow more and more alarmed. The message that she had sent him was eminently unsatisfactory. Angry as he was, he was not bereft of interest in her, and her prolonged absence provoked something more than mere curiosity to find her. For a week he hoped against hope for her return, and then he sought a private detective, and, with many admonitions as to secrecy and discretion, placed the matter in his hands. The private detective had at one time been connected with the Pinkerton Agency, and he was rarely astute.

Yorke's instructions were to discover Mrs. Yorke's present place of residence, and what particulars were possible, without divulging to her, or to those near her, that any search was in progress.

In less than a week he was in possession of all the important facts. From the druggist at the corner the detective learned that Mrs. Yorke had enquired the way to Shackamaxon street; from

the District Messenger office nearest to that thoroughfare he learned that she had sent a message to the Salisbury at about midnight on the day she had disappeared ; from shopkeepers and other neighbors he learned that a woman answering her description had come to live, on or about that day, at the residence of old Mrs. Rourke, whose history—seeing that she had dwelt in the same house for nearly half a century, was easily obtainable ; and from the servants in the Rourke homestead, itself, he secured, without seeming to be at all inquisitive or having the least object in view, the information that the visitor was a niece of their mistress.

Thus fortified with information, Yorke's anxiety dwindled. He ascertained, moreover, that his wife was very well, and apparently most cheerful. And now that his anxiety was once more allayed, his anger at her course reasserted itself. He gave instructions to the detective to keep him acquainted with her movements, and, from that moment strove, so far as it lay in his power, to cast her from his mind, and to give his attention wholly to business, which, for a fortnight, owing to his disquietude, had been in a measure neglected.

Not many days after this the detective appeared, early one afternoon, in his private office and whispered to him that Mrs. Yorke was at the Salisbury. He had ridden down in the same car with her ; he had followed her up in the elevator, and he had seen her enter her own apartments. He had, moreover, seen a large hand-satchel of hers delivered from the house in Shackamaxon street to a local expressman, and had heard the directions given to take it to the Salisbury.

Therefore, Yorke at once began to turn over the numerous plans that he had arranged for his conduct when he should meet his wife again. He rehearsed the words with which he intended to greet her. He drilled himself in the arguments he proposed to use to prove that she had committed in deserting him a sin that was unpardonable. He even thought of his attitude of body when he should face her, and how he should wear an injured expression that would show her at once that he considered her very much in the wrong.

When, however, at five o'clock that evening, just as the sun was sinking, and dusk filled the rooms, he entered the apartment, he forgot his set phrases ; and, coming suddenly upon Katherine seated at her escritoire, writing, he exclaimed

suddenly, commonplacely, with the only words that presented themselves at the moment :

“ Hello! You’re back again, eh! ”

She looked up, as much surprised as he. She had not expected him until an hour later, at the earliest.

“ Yes, ” she answered, “ I—— ” and then she hesitated. She too had fashioned in her mind this first conversation, and it was taking an altogether different trend.

Yorke looked at her critically. She did not seem to have lost flesh in her fortnight’s absence. She was just as plump and just as fair as when he had seen her last. He cast about for something to say. He had walked into the room with his overcoat still on, and his gloves, too, which he now proceeded to remove. He had previously determined to give no hint of his knowledge concerning her, but the only words that came to him, and that seemed to force their way out between his teeth were these :

“ I hope you enjoyed your visit! ”

“ Exceedingly, ” Katherine replied.

“ Your letter was somewhat brief, ” he added, sarcastically. She made no answer for a moment, but bent her head over her writing.

“I was persuaded to send what I did,” she said at last; defiantly, “I had no intention of writing to you.”

“I have to thank your persuader then, and not you,” returned Yorke. Her words froze the gradually thawing ice of his mood. His anger grew more bitter. He could not trust himself to say more, and turned away to the hall, where he pulled off his coat, savagely, and hung it upon the rack. He walked by the boudoir, in which he had found his wife, into the drawing room, and pressing a button in the wall lighted the chandelier. The same magazine that he had picked up on that eventful night over two weeks before was still lying upon the table, and he took it up once again, and seated himself, but not until he had been holding it fully fifteen minutes did he realize that it was wrong side up, and that a reversed advertising page was before him. Then he threw it down angrily, and rising, paced the floor. His resolution to make a full confession to Katherine, formed on the occasion of her disappearance and his anxiety concerning her, had long ago been cast away. He was in no mind now to take any steps toward mollifying her. She had misjudged him. If he

suffered from the consequences of this misjudgment, there was to him a cruel satisfaction in the belief that she too suffered ; and he was willing that she should be so punished.

After a while he threw himself upon the couch whereupon he had dreamed on that other occasion, but he did not dream now. He lay awake, thinking, wondering where all this would end, speculating whether the estrangement would grow—whether the breach would widen, or whether, gradually, these now strange relations would come to be familiar matters of everyday life, the usual, rather than the unusual. There was a certain satisfaction, to be sure, in having his wife again under the same roof with him, but then, she was not the same wife that she used to be, and he asked himself whether, after all, he cared to have this new wife. In the old days, his wife had been a pleasure, a delight, congenial, companionable, bright, happy, joyous. Now she was like a ghost of the past—an unpleasant reminder, with whom, though she chose to continue in her present vein, he was doomed to live henceforth.

The door bell rang, and he rose to answer it, but Katherine was there before him. He heard

her asking for a messenger to go to a florists. She had written down what she wanted, she said. It was that she was writing when Yorke came in. Her husband returned to the drawing room, and stood for some minutes looking out of the window. Presently the clock struck six. He crossed to Katherine's boudoir and entered without knocking. Over a chair lay her last-purchased evening gown, ready to be put on. She was standing in front of a mirror arranging her hair.

"Would you prefer to dine here in the rooms, to-night, or up-stairs?" Yorke asked.

She did not answer him for a second. Then, without changing her position, or ceasing a moment in her braiding, she replied :

"I am dining out this evening."

Yorke gave evidence of his surprise.

"Dining out!" he repeated, in astonishment, "With whom?"

"Mrs. Potts gives a dinner before the Dancing Class."

"And I?" he asked.

"I accepted for you."

"O, you did!"

"Yes, I thought I told you."

“I do not know that I care to go.”

“Perhaps you had better,” Katherine returned, calmly ; “one must do things, now and then, for the sake of appearances.”

“I didn’t imagine you believed in that theory.”

“I have had it preached to me,” she replied, “and I am a convert. However, you can please yourself.”

For answer Yorke went into his dressing room, and got into his evening clothes.

CHAPTER XV

FROM HOMAGE TO HOSTILITY

AT the dinner given by Mrs. Jack Potts, Mrs. Yorke was scintillant. From the moment that she appeared in the drawing room, throughout the seven courses at table, up to the instant of her departure for Mrs. Brokaw's subscription dance, she shed upon the company a brilliancy of fancy that amused and delighted. Her wit was delicate and appropriate, her humor was spontaneous and contagious, her banter was refined and good natured, and her retorts were quick and apposite. Her husband, in spite of his annoyance, was proud of her, and the rest of the party involuntarily conceded, and enthusiastically applauded her conversational supremacy. Physically, too, she was at her best, and her gown was strikingly becoming. Tad Pemberton, who sat opposite her, devoured her with greedy eyes, and Montie Willington's admiration was echoed in every word he spoke. Big, blond Jack Potts, too,

who had taken her in to dinner, seemed thoroughly under the spell of her fascinations, while as for his *alterego*, "Duke" Nolan, a round, rubicand little fellow, with that tell-tale flush of over-indulgence in his face, he whispered to Miss Bassett, who sat beside him, that he considered Mrs. Yorke: "a stunnah, by George, don't you know!"

The homage that performed so prominent a part at the dinner, however, was tempered not a little at the subsequent dance by something quite the reverse. Katherine had not been in the hall over ten minutes before the chilliness of the social atmosphere in certain quarters became apparent. Mrs. Brokaw, herself, had received her most frigidly, and this was the more marked by reason of the contrasting cordiality with which she greeted Mrs. Potts, who came just after her. The Countess Rapsberg, a tall showy young woman, with an abundance of bust and a superabundance of tawny, crispy hair—a Philadelphia wife separated, but not divorced from her titled German lord—had scarcely noticed the bow with which Mrs. Yorke had favored her; and Mrs. Wistar-Rittenhouse, a sister of Mrs. Cadwalader-Beech, had taken pains to give her the cut direct, staring

straight into her eyes as she passed her, without a sign of recognition in the stare.

This cold wave, culminating in the icy rudeness of one of the undisputed leaders of the smartest set in Philadelphia society, drove the color from Katherine's cheeks, and caused her to bite her lips in a sudden fit of passionate anger. For a moment every thing about her was hazy and indistinct. People passed and repassed her as shadows, without form. She forgot, for the time being, the man with whom she was walking. His words made no impression upon her. They were lost amid the unintelligible chatter of many voices, and the melodious strains of the violins. Her eyes and her ears were turned inward, and she was asking the why and the wherefore of the insults to which she had just been subjected. Dr. Lewis had warned her against the gossip that was already rife. It was this gossip then—the story that she had quarreled with, and deserted her husband—that had made her a social leper. But Mrs. Cadwalader-Beech, she began to tell herself—Mrs. Cadwalader-Beech knew that she was simply visiting her aunt who was ill. She had done Mrs. Cadwalader-Beech a service, and in return Mrs. Cadwalader-Beech would, no doubt,

champion her. Mrs. Wistar-Rittenhouse could not have heard the truth, or she would not have been so cruel. She wondered where Mrs. Cadwalader-Beech was. She would be present, of course, unless her daughter's illness had taken a still more serious turn, and, if Mrs. Cadwalader-Beech spoke to her, she could afford to laugh at the others, to snap her fingers at them. This was Philadelphia, then! Self-righteous, prudish, puritanical, straightlaced, suspicious.

When, suddenly, her revery ended, she came back to the room and the company, the lights, the decorations and the music, she heard some one speaking to her, and then remembered that it was Montie Willington who was beside her.

"By Jove!" he was saying in a half-whisper, "I'll bet you let out our secret to that old cat."

"What?" queried Katherine, groping after his meaning. "Who? What secret?"

"Didn't you see her?"

"See whom?"

"The Cadwalader-Beech woman."

"No! Where?"

"There, just back of us. Do you mean to say you didn't see the way she looked at you?"

"I didn't know she was here,"

“Lucky for you,” he laughed, “I’m sure, though, you must have let fall our secret—Spring Garden street, you know—and she has found it.”

“Spring Garden street?” repeated Katherine, musingly.

“Yes ; don’t you remember I——”

“O, yes ; of course! No, I don’t think—Ah!” she exclaimed, suddenly, a light breaking upon her, “you are a lantern to my feet, Mr. Willington,” and she laughed merrily.

“A good joke?” he asked.

“Capital,” Katherine answered, still laughing ; “it is the most amusing thing I have heard of, in a long while. I never for one instant fancied that you were in earnest about Spring Garden street, and up-town, and all that ; but now—O, it can’t be!”

“Can’t it?” observed Montie, convincingly, “Well, you’ll find out, if, as I suspect, you have confided to Mrs. Cadwalader-Beech your birth place ; that’s all.”

The orchestra had struck into a waltz, and all the floor was seemingly in motion ; débutantes, in filmy white ; young matrons in light silks ; dowagers in black velvet.

“Come!” said Montie; and Katherine and he joined the throng of dancers.

“She’s a nice one to cut anybody!” the young man observed, as, in the whirl, they passed near where Mrs. Cadwalader-Beech was sitting, with a homely and neglected bud niece under her wing.

“Why?” asked Katherine, curiously.

Montie laughed.

“I wish, I dared tell you,” he said.

“Daren’t you?”

“I’m afraid not. It may get into the newspapers, though, and then you’ll know.

“And can the newspapers print what you wouldn’t tell me?”

“I have some respect for modesty;” rejoined Montie, smiling. “Some of the newspapers haven’t.”

When the music ceased they stopped, but not until then. At that juncture a tall man approached, bowing to Mrs. Yorke, and Willington withdrew. It was Dr. Lewis, looking handsomer than usual, Katherine thought, in the faultless black and white of his evening clothes.

“It is shocking!” he said, frankly.

“What?” she asked, in utter ignorance of his meaning.

"This conspiracy against you," he went on. "Come, let us find some corner where we can talk, and not be overheard."

He led her away in search of sequestration. The hall in which the Tuesday Dances are held does not offer many opportunities for *tête-à-têtes*, and the Doctor was not very successful. He found, however, a more or less secluded nook, by which people passed at intervals.

"You don't mean to say," he began, when they were seated, "that you have not noticed it."

"How very humiliating you are!" she rejoined, with mock offence. "It is not a pleasant subject."

"It is a decidedly unpleasant one, I admit," he pursued, with feeling, "but I thought you might be curious about it, and I am in a position to enlighten you. I am Mrs. Cadwalader-Beech's physician, you know."

"Yes, I know."

"She told me with great indignation that you, the niece of a woman that lived in Kensington—'an impossible neighborhood,' to use her own phraseology—had actually contrived to get into society, and that she meant to leave no stone unturned to drive you back to your place. I ar-

gued with her, but I might as well have tried to talk the Delaware into turning back from its course to the sea."

"It is the unpardonable sin, I suppose," laughed Mrs. Yorke; "it really seems most ridiculous. I should never have believed it, but for this episode. And has everybody in society, always lived down-town?"

"He that has not, has managed in some way to make society forget that he ever lived elsewhere in Philadelphia. Had your aunt resided on Hester street, New York, your chances would have been better."

Dr. Lewis evidently did not believe with Balzac that one must put cloaks on all truths, even the nicest. He usually led out his truths naked, and appeared to delight in the consternation that they created. Those he produced for Mrs. Yorke's delectation were clad only in a thin veil of cynicism.

"My case is hopeless then, you think, doctor?" She asked the question playfully. It still seemed to her that the whole affair must be a burlesque.

"In time, perhaps," he replied, with some irony, "it may be forgotten that you visited

Shackamaxon street, where one of your kinswomen resided."

"And if it were known," persisted Katherine, with a recklessness born of her present mood, "that I first saw the light of day on Spring Garden street and lived there until I was seven years old——"

"Did you?" he interrupted.

"I did."

"Then," he answered, with feigned seriousness, "should that fact become known, I see no salvation for you. With such people as Mrs. Cadwalader-Beech, you are simply out of the question."

"And the Assembly?" she queried.

"The Assembly!" he cried, raising his hands in mock horror at the suggestion; "a native of Borneo would be more welcome."

And then they both laughed. But in the merriment of Mrs. Yorke there was something of chagrin, mingled with indignation. What seems very ludicrous is sometimes very serious. Never before, as far back as she could remember, had she ever experienced anything like this. In the early days of her married life she had, as has already been told, spent some time abroad, where

she had met and been entertained by men and women of noble birth and elevated rank, without a question as to her antecedents. In New York her position had never been disputed. She had received, and had been received by, the best of the ultra fashionable folk of the metropolis. It was reserved for Philadelphia, with its ridiculous assumption of superiority, to snub her, and she could see no way in which she might revenge herself. She bethought her of what her aunt had told her about her ancestress—Katherine Lawrence—but to trumpet such matters of family history into the ears of women who had turned from her with a sneer on their lips was scarcely practicable. Moreover she did not care to depend on those who had gone before for what she believed she was entitled to, by right of her own personality. The incident of this evening had given her a new ambition. She would not rest content until she had humbled those who had made an effort to humble her. Though no means were at present at hand, she determined to leave no cranny unsearched to find them. She had a few friends, at all events, and if these few would aid her, everything was possible.

Three weeks ago she would have retired in

disgust from the fray for which she was now eager. At that time she regarded her home life as all sufficient to her. At heart, society bored, rather than amused, her. But her home life had lost its savor. She had turned to society for distraction, and for whatever compensation it might afford ; and to give it up, at the moment she most required it, was not in reason to be expected of her. The fight for place, would merely add zest to that diversion.

“ You have fallen among Pharisees, my dear Mrs. Yorke,” Dr. Lewis was saying ; “ you are getting an idea of the hospitality of Philadelphia—so much vaunted—when it happens to be one of its own, and not a stranger, that knocks at its door.”

“ At that moment Tad Pemberton came up to claim her for the waltz, and she went off laughing, as though she regarded it all as a huge joke. Here and there she heard whispers about her as she passed, usually uttered by people whom she did not know ; but she gave no sign of her annoyance, or even that she was conscious of being the subject of remark.

Just before supper, as she stopped breathless after a mad frolic about the crowded room with

Jack Potts, the appearance of Dr. Lewis, with solemn face, pushing his way towards her, startled her out of her natural self-possession. Intuitively she knew that he brought ill tidings, and when he thrust a half sheet of note paper into her hand and bade her read, she was not surprised. It was from the trained nurse that she had left that day attending upon her aunt : it conveyed the news that Mrs. Rourke's condition had suddenly changed for the worse, and it bade Dr. Lewis come without delay.

"I fear," he said solemnly, as her eyes ran nervously down the page, "I fear that this may mean the end. Your aunt is a very old woman, and her heart has been in jeopardy for years. If you care to accompany me, a place in my carriage is at your disposal."

The shock to Katherine was painful. Her first sensation was one of umbrage at the man beside her, who, in pleading with her to leave Mrs. Rourke, had persuaded her that her aunt's illness was not serious; but this was almost instantly succeeded by a desire to atone as far as possible for what appeared to her like neglect, and she accepted gladly the proffered conveyance. She made her way quickly to the reception room, looking eagerly for her husband to inform him of

her intended action, but Yoike was not in sight.

She hurriedly donned her cloak ; and over her slippers she slipped a pair of fur-lined carriage shoes. In the passageway to the street, she met Montie Willington.

“ Won't you kindly find Mr. Yorke for me,” she said, nervously, “ and tell him that I have just received word that my aunt is very ill ; and that I am going to her, with Dr. Lewis ? ”

As she finished speaking, the doctor was at her side.

“ Come ! ” he urged, starting down the stairs.

“ We have no time to lose ! ”

A moment sufficed to call his carriage to the door.

Under the awning, over the length of muddied carpet, stretched across the sidewalk to the curb, Katherine followed the physician. To the coachman Dr. Lewis delivered his directions in a loud, clear voice :

“ Mrs. Rourke's, Shackamaxon street. ”

Dr. Dick Turpin passing in at that moment recognized his fellow disciple of Esculapius ; recognized, too, the woman who accompanied him, and heard the address given.

“It is true, then,” he muttered to himself.
“Who would have believed it? She certainly
has the appearance and the manners of a lady.”

CHAPTER XVI

TWO CALLS OF CONDOLENCE

THE *Public Ledger* published a brief obituary of Mrs. Rourke, out of respect for her eighty odd years. It is a habit with that journal thus to reward longevity. The article, however, made no mention of any of her distinguished progenitors, and the fact that one of them had been instrumental in organizing the Assemblies, was, of course, omitted. It included such important particulars as the early avocation of her husband, Michael Rourke, who had run away to sea when a mere lad, and the unnecessary addendum that one of his brothers, now deceased, had established the firm of Rourke & Bass, fish dealers. The information had evidently been gleaned from the collateral Rourkes—descendants of the fish dealers—who abounded in the neighborhood, and crowded the house, on the day of the funeral, with themselves and their progeny. This kindly notice was respectfully held back by the newspaper until after the obsequies, and printed on Saturday,

as news-matter, in the advertising supplement issued on that day.

Whether Katherine Yorke would ever have seen it, had it not been for Mr. Thaddeus Pemberton, is a question. The fact remains, however, that it was he that brought the article to her attention, calling at the Salisbury with it, on the afternoon of the day it appeared. His visit was ostensibly one of condolence, but in reality it had quite another object—an object that no man in his sound senses would have dared to entertain. But Mr. Thaddeus Pemberton, as it very promptly developed, was not in his sound senses. In a word, Tad had been drinking, not wisely, but too well, and he looked upon matters through lenses that possessed a magnifying power of no small degree.

He had, for instance exaggerated Katherine's consent to favor him with a waltz at the Tuesday Dance, with a confession on her part of the passion that he had been for months endeavoring to excite. Her attitude of bare toleration toward her husband, which would have been clear to a blind man, was, he flattered himself, wholly the result of his efforts to prove that husband unworthy of her; and now he had come armed, and

confident of convincing her that Philadelphia was no longer possible for her as an abiding place. Having succeeded in this, he would, he told himself, in a burst of abnegatory eloquence, offer to take her to the world's end; and, in his exhilarated state, he entertained no thought of failure.

One of the first of Katherine's promised relapses into extravagance was the employment of a maid—a luxury that she had hitherto regarded as unnecessary and not to be dreamed of. The maid opened the door for young Mr. Pemberton, when he presented himself, and, having shown him into the drawing room, she carried his card to her mistress.

When, five minutes later, Katherine entered, she found him nodding in a chair. Her entrance, however, aroused him, and he stood up, and apologized. His face was flushed, and his breath odorous.

“I was at the Bassetts' ball, last night,” he said, in explanation, “it was four when I got away, and then we played poker in Mifflin's rooms until nine. I haven't had a wink of sleep in thirty hours.”

Mrs. Yorke ignored his apology. She was not

in a mood for such confidences, but Tad failed to grasp the situation.

"I saw this in the paper this morning," he pursued, holding out a folded copy of the *Ledger* just as he had held out a folded copy of the *Herald* on a former occasion. "I didn't know whether or not you'd see it. Some cad put it in to injure you. I'll bet it was Willington."

Katherine found a seat on a sofa, and young Pemberton sat down near her. She read the article, hurriedly.

"No," she said, at last, "I had not seen it. It is very kind of them to mention my aunt."

"Kind!" exclaimed Tad, in the loud voice that usually goes hand in hand with even semi-intoxication, "kind! why it's a stab in the back."

"I don't understand it that way," she rejoined, looking at it again. "I'm sure it says that Mrs. Rourke was 'an estimable woman,' that she did 'much good to the poor,' and that she 'will be greatly missed.'"

"Yes, yes," cried Tad, excitedly, "but what does it say about her husband, and his brother in the fish business? That's where the stab comes in. It's outrageous. After all I had done for

you, too. Why I had the Assembly book as good as promised for you, and now——”

“Now that I am in mourning,” interrupted Katherine, quietly, “of course I can’t go. Nevertheless I am grateful for your kindness.”

Tad looked at her earnestly for a moment. The black gown that she wore, seemed to him to enhance her loveliness. Her skin was all the clearer because of the sharp contrast, and her brown hair was never so rich in bronzes. She smiled as she expressed her thanks, and a dimple came into each cheek.

“I wish I were sure of that,” he said, suggestively.

“Sure of what?”

“Your gratitude.”

“Do you doubt it, then?” she asked, rather annoyed.

He did not make a direct answer.

“You see, Mrs. Yorke,” he began, drawing his chair closer to her, “you see that notice in the paper means the end of you, socially, in Philadelphia.”

It was very bluntly put, and for a moment Katherine was in a manner stunned by the obser-

vation. She was, at all events, speechless for the moment, and Tad proceeded.

“People might in time—our people, I mean—have swallowed the fact that you had an aunt living in Fishtown; they might have overlooked the story which I have heard and a good many others have heard, within the past week, that you were born on Spring Garden street. I say you might have been able to live all that down. There is Brokaw, for instance, who has managed to make people forget that his uncle married his housekeeper; and there is Mrs. Ferrell, who lived down the fact that her husband’s mother used to take in washing; but when it comes to being related to people that sold fish, why——”

“But I’m not related to any one that sold fish,” protested Mrs. Yorke, indignantly; “I’m no more related to the man Rourke mentioned here,” tapping the paper, angrily, “than—than you are.”

Tad smiled, grimly, and drew his chair still closer.

“Perhaps not,” he acquiesced, discreetly, “perhaps not, but all the same, society doesn’t go into these fine points. The Assembly’s door is shut to you; everybody you’ve ever known in

our set will cut you at the first opportunity ; you might as well live in Kamschatka as in Philadelphia, for all you'll see or know of the people that are worth knowing."

Katherine rose, her cheeks blazing with the anger that this arraignment had provoked.

"And you——" she stammered, scarcely able to speak, so nervously enraged was she, "and you—you—come here and tell me this! Why?"

Tad rose, too, and faced her. He was very close to her, and his alcohol-laden breath assaulted her at every word. Into his face had come a pleased expression, born of the self-confidence that possessed him in spite of Katherine's display of temper.

"Because," he said, reaching for her hand, which she had clenched in her rage, "because I am your one friend in all this city."

She drew her hand away and thrust it behind her.

"O, you are!" she observed, with a smile, more sarcastic even than her tone.

"Yes," he answered, still blinded by his conceit to the real situation, "I am. Your husband is false to you ; your——"

"Stop!" she shrieked, her eyes blazing so

fiercely now that even this densest of dense bodies began to suspect that he had gone too far. "Stop! I will not suffer another word from you."

She brushed past him, overturning the frail chair on which she had sat, as she went, and pressed an electric button in the opposite wall. The sound of a tinkling bell answered the pressure, and in an instant the maid appeared.

"Lizette," she cried, imperiously, her whole frame a-tremble with anger and excitement, "show that person to the door!"

Even then he would have expostulated, but, as he opened his mouth to speak, she passed from the room into her boudoir adjoining, and his utterance changed to a muttered imprecation, as he preceded the French girl out through the narrow passageway.

Katherine heard the door close, and then, as though that had been the signal for which she was waiting, she threw herself down upon a cushioned corner-seat, and tears came to the relief of her tense nerves.

After awhile she began to look at the matter more calmly and reasonably. She had dismissed young Pemberton because he had dared to detract from her husband's honor, but she had been

annoyed, previous to that detraction, by statements that, however rude it may have been of him to make them, were, she could easily understand, probably true. They were in direct line, she saw, with the asseverances of Dr. Lewis; and the declaration of the doctor that she had fallen among Pharisees came back to her with redoubled force. It was hard for her to believe, nevertheless, that a community existed where one's self went for so little, and one's progenitors for so much. She had heard these stories of Philadelphia before, but had never taken them seriously. She regarded them in the same light that she regarded the witticisms about grass growing in the streets, but now she realized that in this direction there had been no exaggeration. Presently the door bell rang again, and when Lizette came in with a card, Katherine read upon it, with surprise, the name of Mrs. John Potts. There was one woman in the city, then, that could rise above the petty prejudices of her ilk. She dried her eyes, and her heart softened a little at this evidence of independence; but before she had finished laving her reddened eyelids, she began to question whether Mrs. Potts had heard; whether she had seen the article in the paper;

and whether she knew about Spring Garden street. And then, suddenly, she remembered that Mrs. Potts' mother was a Boston woman, and her husband a Baltimore man, and she began to understand that it was possible for her to be different from those bigoted natives that were no broader than the city itself, from the Delaware to the Schuylkill.

Mrs. Jack Potts, as she was called, a tall, slender young matron, with the air of a princess—an air that could have made of rags a regal adornment—had come, really, to pay a simple call of condolence. She had taken a fancy to Mrs. Yorke on the occasion of their first meeting at a luncheon, given by the Countess of Rapsberg, and she was not of the sort to permit such minor considerations as plebeian kinsfolk, if such really existed—of which she had grave doubts—to interfere with the establishment of a friendship that she particularly desired.

Her greeting, when Katherine appeared, was so heartily cordial and so earnestly sympathetic, that for a moment it was all either of them could do to keep back the tears that were evident in their voices if not on their cheeks. Her visit was a long one, and before she rose to depart the two

women had gone over together the whole subject of what one can do, and what one cannot do, and still retain a position in the inner circle of Quaker City society. Mrs. Potts was indignant at the snubbing to which she had been told Mrs. Yorke had been subjected, and her advice was not only to resent it, but to make, as she put it, the "fight of your life to ride over those who have dared to treat you so shamefully."

"I hate," she said, as she was standing, ready to go, "to be the bearer of gossip, but this matter has so aroused me that I feel I must tell you the kind of people that have presumed to set themselves above you. Some Frenchman once said that many have lived on a pedestal that will never have a statue when dead, and that is the case here, in Philadelphia. You know, I suppose, that Mildred Cadwalader-Beech has been very ill. Well, do you know what the trouble was?"

Katherine had not heard. Frankly, she said, it had not interested her. There was something about the girl and her mother that she detested.

Mrs. Potts' voice, as she conveyed the information, sank to a whisper.

“Shocking!” cried Katherine, in amazement.

“Are you sure?”

“Positive!”

“And what have they done with——”

“O, it died, fortunately. And, mark my word, —that girl will be received everywhere next season, just as if nothing had happened.”

“Are they going to do nothing to the man?” Katherine exclaimed. “Can’t they make him marry her?”

Mrs. Potts laughed.

“He is, it appears, a composite creature,” she answered, “and there is a law against polygamy, you know.”

CHAPTER XVII

THE CONTENTS OF A SEA CHEST

IT was not until some days after the funeral that Mrs. Rourke's will was found. A certain safe deposit company, with characteristic deliberation, notified the heirs, just as letters of administration had been applied for, that the will was in its custody, and that it was, itself, the executor. To Katherine's surprise she learned that she was the chief beneficiary. Save for some minor bequests to two or three charities and to two or three old and faithful servants, the entire estate was devised to the testator's "beloved niece, Katherine Lawrence." Nor was the estate one to be lightly regarded. At a moderate estimate its value was upward of half a million—a monument to the expansive power of compound interest.

Katherine's first thought was of the independence that this windfall would afford her. Though Newland's habitual kindness and consideration for her had not changed a jot in spite of her per-

sistent and systematic indifference of manner towards him, she was none the less bitter. She was assured of his inconstancy, and nothing that he could do, no sacrifice that he could make, would heal the gaping wound through love and pride that this assurance kept always open. Her life with him was obnoxious to her. She had longed from the first to sunder the association, but she refused to become a burden upon again her step-father, and shrank from the notoriety that would ensue. With this fortune at her command, she could go abroad; and her stay, she resolved, should be prolonged. The settlement of the estate, however, was not a matter of days but of months. The processes of the law are leisurely.

Meanwhile there had been sent to the Salisbury, a curious old iron-bound seaman's chest, with a label upon its top, bearing, in faded ink, the words: "Private family papers of Katherine Rourke;" and with its coming there recurred to Katherine her aunt's reference to the old letters that proved her ancestry, hidden away in boxes in the garret, inches deep in dust.

Yorke innocently suggested that it should be sent to the general storeroom, for it was not an ornament, and in the hall it was an obstruction;

but Mrs. Yorke would not hear of this. She had it moved into her own room, and prepared to open it, but the key was missing, and a locksmith had to be sent for.

The contents of the chest, when brought to light, were most interesting. Packet after packet of letters, the rich color of old ivory, were found, tied with rotting ribbons; and to some there still clung remnants of sealing wax with the impression of crested seals clearly visible. In one corner, Katherine came upon several heavy, ornately-bound books, with backs of brown leather, which, when opened, proved to be the diary of Katherine Lawrence herself, and rich in authentic glimpses of life in the colony, nearly a century and a half ago. But what proved most interesting of all, was a large sheet of parchment, illuminated like an old missal, and bearing at its top in great old English letters, the legend—"Family Tree of the Lawrences." Its last record was now nearly a hundred years old, but its root bore the date 1513, and it was as many-branched as a banyan.

Katherine was delighted. It was late in the afternoon when the locksmith had condescended to come, and just as this treasure was unearthed,

Yorke arrived from the office. The desire to communicate to some one the news of her discovery, the impulse to share with some one her joy over this certificate of ancient, if not indeed noble, birth—for she had not yet carefully traced the names, nor deciphered certain seeming hieroglyphics—rose above all other considerations, and she called out, with such a ring of the old merriment in her voice, that Yorke rushed to her without stopping to remove his overcoat, hoping that his course of disregarding her all-too-apparent coldness, had, at last, produced the one result he desired. He could not imagine that anything had occurred to disabuse her mind of the suspicion that he knew held sway there, and yet he was hopeful that this even might have been swept away by his studied devotion.

“Newland!” she had called, blithely. “Come! look!” And when he entered she held up the sheet of parchment to him. He, too, was interested, and his interest was grateful to her, though his presence chilled, for the moment, the warmth of her manner as suddenly as it had been excited. He took the diagram from her hands, and here and there his eye lighted upon familiar names. His wife’s geneological line was certainly linked

with that of some of the oldest and best families, not only of Philadelphia, but of New York as well, and of Baltimore, and there were branches too, that ran off into Virginia.

“And see where it starts!” he exclaimed, suddenly. “By Jove, Pink! You certainly are in it. Your original ancestor, I see, was a knight, who fought and fell under the Earl of Surrey, at Flodden Field. They evidently couldn’t ascertain the date of his birth, and so they put in the date of his death, instead.”

Katherine looked over his shoulder and he explained to her what she had failed to understand.

“O, isn’t it lovely!” she shouted, excitedly, “And to think we never knew anything about it.”

No man is so democratic as not to experience a thrill of pride over the knowledge that his forebears were better than their fellows, and the lineage of his wife is of next importance to his own. But what pleased Yorke far more, in this instance, than the discovery that Katherine’s line reached back to a knight who fell at Flodden Field, was her high spirits, and still more her use of the pronoun “we.” For upward of a month now, he had seemingly been out of her mind. In no way had she ever referred to him in that time, much

less joined him with herself in any manner whatsoever. Her joy she was sharing with him now, it appeared, though, in her sorrow over her aunt's death he had been ignored utterly. His words of attempted comfort had been received in silence. To such mere acquaintances as had sent their cards as a delicate indication of their sympathy, she had acknowledged the thought by returning to them her own, but as for her husband, not a word had rewarded his efforts to lighten her grief. Several times he had thought again of making a clean breast of it all, as he had planned on that night when she went away, but the recurrent thought of that night steeled his will, and he had held to his original resolution of silence. Now, he flattered himself, it was coming out all right, after all. Time is the best of all salves, and the wound that it will not heal, is deep, indeed.

They took some of the old letters with them up to dinner, and read them to each other across the table, between the courses ; and, when dinner was over, they dragged the chest into the drawing room and in a little while, floor, tables, couches and chairs, were strewn with musty relics of the past. In the midst of it all, Montie Willington sent in his card, and Yorke, insisting that they

should make no stranger of him, he was admitted to the disorder, and permitted to join in the investigation of the treasures.

The old letters delighted him. He found one from Washington, and another from Robert Morris, and it was he that discovered, after some little search, the one for which they were all looking—the missive from young John Penn to Katherine Lawrence, after she had declined the proffered honor of his hand in marriage. They had come across a reference to this *billet-doux* in her diary, and they had been speculating as to whether the original was in the collection.

“O, I say,” suggested Montie, when he had read this stately missive, so full of dignity and reverence, with all the s’s like f’s, “I wish you’d let me publish this. I’ll have it photographed, and a *fac-simile* made of it; it will make a rattling good thing for our Sunday edition.”

“I couldn’t think of it,” replied Katherine, taking it from him; “the idea of sharing anything so sacred, with the whole world!”

But Montie was persistent, and when he left he had not only that particular letter, but several more, and an abstract of the family tree, and a bushel of gossip, culled from the diary. And,

when Sunday came, Katherine was not a little shocked and mortified to find herself the heroine of a full-page story in the newspaper to which Mr. Willington contributed. They had resurrected, too, a picture of her that had done service when she was a belle at Narragansett Pier, and the article was headed in great staring letters:

“THE LADY AND HER TREE.”

It was on a very bright, crisp and cold Sunday in late December that the public was thus introduced to Mrs. Yorke's ancestors, and they and she were freely discussed over the breakfast tables of many households. Nor did the discussion end there. The subject was the chief topic on West Walnut street, after church, that morning, and the men in the clubs talked of it over their matutinal cocktails.

The service at St. Mark's being ended, Mrs. Cadwalader-Beech leaned over and asked Mrs. Brokaw, who occupied the pew back of her, whether she had seen it, and Mrs. Brokaw said that she had, of course, and then Mrs. Cadwalader-Beech declared that she knew old Mrs. Rourke very well, indeed, and that she had always regarded Mrs. Rourke as a type of what several generations of blue blood would do for a woman.

"Her bearing is so queenly," she added, tritely, and Mrs. Brokaw agreed with her, and then, remembering something this same woman had said a month previous, she made a mental note that the hypocrites, as well as the fools, are not yet all under the sod.

Mrs. Jack Potts talked of nothing else during her walk home from Holy Trinity, with Miss Basset, and her abounding joy at her friend's vindication was evident in every feature of her perfect face. Mrs. Pemberton told Mrs. Wistar-Rittenhouse that she meant immediately to propose Mrs. Yorke for the Colonial Dames and the Acorn Club; and Mrs. Wistar-Rittenhouse requested the honor of being allowed to second her nomination.

Meanwhile Tad Pemberton was cursing his luck in the apartments of Dolly Foster on South Fifteenth street, and, his temper rising to the point of overflow, he wound up by throwing a book at Dolly's head, because she had chosen to chaff him a little, on not being able to drink as much as he once did.

The Countess of Rapsberg, when she had finished reading the article, lost not a moment in adding Mrs. Yorke's name to her visiting list, from

which she had stricken it after the first Tuesday Dance; and Miss Logan, who had stopped at home from church because her 'false front' was out of curl, ran in next door to tell old Mrs. Turpin all about it.

Dr. Dick Turpin glanced over the paper, seated at a widow of the Philadelphia Club, where his red face, like a setting sun, was one of the Quaker City's landmarks, and with an oath, and a motion to the waiter for another "Scotch and Soda," swore that he always knew that peachy creature was a born lady. He was well born himself and he couldn't be mistaken. But the man that was more pleased than anyone else was Dr. Dayton Lewis, who made haste to call at the Salisbury that afternoon, and to congratulate Mrs. Yorke upon her complete vindication.

"To-morrow," he said, delightedly, "you'll have the whole town at your feet. When you get it there, tread on it."

CHAPTER XVIII

A VISITOR TELLS A STORY

THE trust and safe deposit company that had to do with the settlement of Mrs. Rourke's estate imparted one day to Katherine the news that, if she required any funds, it would be glad to make her advances to any reasonable amount. These tidings were most welcome. Immediately she began her preparations for going abroad. She drew ten thousand dollars and deposited it with the Drexels. Against this, it was her plan, to have a letter of credit issued. In London she had friends, and at Vienna one of her step-sisters, who had married an Austrian count, was living. On the other side of the water she would certainly not be lonely, and on this side there was for her now no attraction. The publication of her pedigree had, as Dr. Lewis had predicted, brought her many cards, and many invitations, but she really experienced little satisfaction in this restoration to social favor. In that she was afforded an opportunity to return the snubs of Mrs. Cadwala-

der-Beech, Mrs. Wistar-Rittenhouse, Mrs. Brokaw, the Countess of Rapsberg, and some others, it was, of course, a delight, but, the battle being won, the trophies appeared less valuable in the possession than in the pursuit, and her desire was to escape from the scene of the fray.

Of Philadelphia society she had learned quite as much as she cared to know. There were people in it, she had ascertained, that conscious of their right to place by reason of birth, were neither exclusive nor bigoted—people that would have flung the doors wide to all applicants of gentle demeanor, taste, education, cultivation—but it is not these representatives of the old families, she had discovered, who rule. The larger part of society in the city of Penn is governed by upstarts—by those who, having fought hard for the summit themselves, turn at once upon those who are fighting after them—invaders who, once inside the gates, join with the defenders to keep out their less speedy comrades.

Katherine accepted the proffered membership in the Society of the Colonial Dames, and declined the honor of admission to the Acorn Club. For a place in the Daughters of the Revolution, she herself made application.

“ I should like to wear the badge abroad,” she said, in a burst of patriotism.

Yorke heard of her intended European flight with ill-concealed dismay. At the moment it was seemingly impossible for him to accompany her, and he doubted that, were he able to go, his companionship would be welcome. His self-gratulation over her changed mood in contemplating the sea-chest and its contents was, he had discovered, premature, and the reaction had been more painful to him than was the original coldness. If he might go with her now, undesired as his companionship might be, he felt that he would be able to win back her confidence, and with confidence would undoubtedly come love. But affairs at the office were in the balance. The weight of a hair would send them either way. Moreover, the stocks and bonds that he still held were gradually climbing upward. It was possible that another three months would see him on his feet again— independent; and it was a question whether he could afford to risk the financial possibilities of stopping at home, for the sentimental possibilities of going abroad. Sentiment, however, is sometimes more valuable than gold and silver, and Yorke began to view it in that light.

“I have about half made up my mind, he said, one evening, as he sat reading his paper, after dinner, while Katherine was studying a Baedeker on the other side of the centre table, “to drop everything, and run across with you.”

She looked up with surprise in her face; and, amid the surprise, Yorke detected evidences of disappointment.

“You don’t seem overjoyed,” he added, a little nettled.

“Don’t I?” she asked, coldly. “Seeming is sometimes feeling.”

He returned to his paper; his heart a lump of lead in his bosom; but he did not read. His mind was busy with other things. In the face of such a rebuff, going was out of the question. After a while, he got up and went to the club. When he returned the clocks were striking two.

When Katherine came in the next afternoon from a journey to the office of the International Navigation Company on lower Walnut street, laden with charts of the *Paris* and the *New York*, with sailing lists, and memoranda of prices for certain marked state rooms, Lizette met her at the door, with the information that there was a gentleman in the drawing room. He had been

waiting for over an hour, she said, and he would not give his name.

It was nearing five o'clock and the lights not yet having been lit the drawing room was so in dusk that as she entered she failed utterly to recognize the person who rose, with his back to the windows, and came towards her.

"Don't you know me, Kitty?" he asked, extending his hand, and in his voice was that which carried her back years, and brought her childhood before her.

"Alan!" she cried, nervously, and yet gladly, "Alan! How delighted I am to see you!"

"Are you, Kitty?" he asked, as if surprised at the cordiality of her greeting, "I didn't know whether you would be or not."

"Of course I am," she answered; "sit down, while I turn on the electricity, and have Lizette light the lamps. What a time it has been since I saw you! Where have you been? Tell me all about yourself. What are you doing?"

The sudden glow in the room revealed a medium-sized youth, of weak face, a chin a trifle receding, and eyes of the light blue peculiar to young kittens. He was a little loudly dressed,

and his clothes showed evidences of rough, if not long, usage.

"I'm awfully glad to have found you, Kitty," he began, when Katherine had taken a chair near him; "I've wondered for a long while where you were. I went to the old place on Fifth avenue, but nobody knew there; and——"

"But the folks at home knew," she interrupted.

He laughed a little affectedly.

"The folks at home!" he repeated, sneeringly, "O, yes, I dare say, the folks at home knew; but you know I never go home. The governor has forbidden me the house, and he won't let anyone write to me or see me."

"You don't mean it! O, now cruel!"

"Yes; isn't it? However, I guess I can get on without them."

"And how did you find out where I was, then?"

"I saw an article in one of the New York papers, copied from a Philadelphia paper, saying great things about you, and it mentioned the fact that you were living here. So I came over at once."

"You always were fond of me, weren't you,

Alan?" Katherine asked, playfully. "I remember how you used to take my part against your own sisters—But you haven't told me where you have been."

"O, I've been knocking about," he answered, evasively, "I haven't made much of a mark in the world. To tell the truth, Kitty, I'm afraid I never shall amount to very much."

"O, don't say that, Alan. You're 'down on your luck,' as you used to say, that's all. You'll come out all right, yet."

"That's what New always tells me," he replied, a little more cheerfully. "Your husband's a brick, Kit!"

"Yes!" returned Mrs. Yorke, in a way that was non-committal, but with a perceptible change in the cordiality of her manner.

"He is that," the young man pursued. "He wouldn't tell me your address, nor his, because he didn't want you to be bothered, but, by Jove, Kit, he has done more for me than my own flesh and blood. I'd be in the Tombs now, or at Sing Sing, if it hadn't been for New. I'll never forget——"

"O, Alan!" Katherine exclaimed, in horror, "you surely never committed a crime?"

Alan Van Vrancken twisted about in his chair. He twined and untwined his fingers, and he looked at the ceiling. He had, he feared, been a little too precipitate."

"No," he said, at last, "I didn't, Kitty; indeed I didn't; but it looked that way, and a jury would have looked at it so. It was at a ball at the Manhattans. You know I used to go about, long after the governor had upset me. Well, at that ball I picked up a diamond sun-burst off the floor. It was a beauty. I'd been drinking all day, and I drank a lot more there at the ball, and somehow, instead of looking for an owner, why I stuck that thing in my pocket. Well, later, I met a woman that I knew, a music hall singer, and I was fool enough to give it to her. Somehow or other they discovered that I found it—or I thought they had—for they made a bluff of saying in the papers that, if it was not returned on a certain date, they would take steps to put the—the—well, the fellow that found it, where he belonged. I tried every way to get it back, but the girl wouldn't give it up, and then I lost sight of her, and I wanted to run away, but I was afraid that if I attempted it they'd nab me; and just as I was at

my wits' end what to do, I went to New, your husband, and——”

“But how did you find him?” Katherine asked, anxiously, “I thought you didn't know our address.”

“Neither I did, I advertised for him. Put a personal——”

“In the *Herald*?” cried Katherine, excitedly.

“Yes. And though they made a great mix of it——”

“How a mix of it?”

“Why you see I addressed it to him with his name spelled backwards, and I signed it with my name spelled backwards. That would have been ‘Nala,’ but they put an n for an l, and it read ‘Nana.’ I said, meet me at the same place—he knew; it was a saloon on Twenty-third street, near Sixth—What's the matter, Kit? What are you crying about? Come, this won't do, you know! I'm not worth it, old girl, really I'm not. O, please don't cry, Kitty. I hate to see a woman cry!”

But Katherine was crying as though her heart had been freshly torn in twain, whereas, it was only an old wound, reopened for the moment that it might heal the more quickly. After a while

she dried her eyes, and between convulsive little sobs she told Alan that she knew that she was very foolish, and begged him to go on with his story, which he did.

“There’s not much more tell,” he said hurrying to the end. “New came and I put the matter fair and square before him. I begged him not to tell you, because I didn’t want you to know—but somehow I’ve thought since that you deserved to hear what a man your husband is, Kit; what a nobleman!”

Here Katherine began weeping again, and Alan hesitated for a moment.

“Don’t cry any more,” he said, pleadingly; “you haven’t anything to cry for. You’ve got everything any woman can want; lots of money, social position, and the best husband that ever drew breath. Well,” he went on, “I told it all to him, and I told him, too, that the girl was somewhere in Philadelphia, and that unless he could find her, and get that sun-burst from her—beg, borrow or steal it—I’d have to go to prison, and you would be disgraced. Well, what do you suppose he did?”

“I know!” cried Katherine, “he found the girl——”

"He told you!" exclaimed Alan, disappointedly.

"No, no, no," Katherine hastened to protest, "he never breathed a word to me; but I found it out, and—O, Alan! I have suspected him so wrongly, so cruelly, and all the time he has been ——" and here her words were lost in the rush of tears through the reopened flood-gates of her emotion.

"It seems," said Alan, after another pause, "that I've brought an awful lot of worry and trouble even to those I love best, and what I want to do now, is to go away where I won't be a bother any longer. I didn't have the nerve to ask New to help me again, but you, Kit—you've come into a heap of money, you never expected, and I've come to ask you to give me the price of a passage to Europe—steerage, Kittie, anything, so that I can get away. Maybe the Count and Countess, if I once get to Vienna, will marry me to some daughter of a baron or something, and ——"

Katherine had risen, and was at her desk writing before he had finished. When she returned, she handed him a slip of white paper. It was a check on Drexel & Co. He glanced at it, and

saw the figures 500 upon it, and then he caught Katherine in his arms and kissed her.

“By Jove, Kittie!” he exclaimed, heartily, “you’re the right sort. It’s a pity the world isn’t made of such as you and New. I can’t thank you enough for this.”

Katherine wanted him to stop for dinner, but he pleaded some excuse, and, after a few minutes more of desultory talk, he bade her good bye. A quarter of an hour later, Yorke let himself in with his latch key.

CHAPTER XIX

LIGHT AFTER DARKNESS

THE hair's weight had fallen on the side of profit. The company of which Yorke was vice-president had weathered the storm of financial depression. Its shares were selling above par. Its credit was rated excellent. Yorke's investment in it had quadrupled. The stock market, generally, had advanced buoyantly. Several stocks that Yorke held were selling at figures above the prices that he had paid. From all points came reports of reviving business. There were a hundred things to make him jubilant, and yet he returned home with depressed spirits. In the face of Katherine's rebuff it was difficult to carry out his resolve of going abroad with her, and, if he stopped at home, he felt sure the breach would widen. He was inclined to curse the fortune that had made this independence on her part possible. The brilliant light in the hall and drawing room accorded ill with his mood. He removed his overcoat, and having hung it upon the rack, went

into his dressing room, which was dark, and threw himself down upon the couch there, to think.

The door between this little apartment and the adjoining bedchamber was closed, and upon this door, presently, there came a gentle tapping. It was Lizette, he supposed, coming with a message from Katherine, asking him to dress or not to dress, for dinner, according to her whim or her plans, as was now almost a nightly occurrence.

“Come!” he called, a little roughly; and the door opened, slowly. It was at his back and he could not see who entered. He waited a second for the expected request, and then, still lying there with closed eyes, he asked:

“Well! What is it?”

For answer there was a rustle of silken skirts, and then a lithe, limp body fell upon its knees at his side, a head pressed hard upon his breast, and on one of his hands that rested there, he felt the wet of tears. The heart of the man broke suddenly into great, throbbing pulsations. Amaze-ment, joy, sympathy—each was contesting for supremacy. He began stroking his wife’s hair, and then he put his arms about her shoulders, murmuring:

“What is it, dear? What troubles you?”

But for some minutes she made no answer. She knelt there, contrite, unable to frame phrases to tell him of her abject penitence. He tried to soothe her with kindly words. He lifted her head and wiped away her tears. The door through which she had entered had swung noiselessly to after her, and the room was dark as Cimmeria.

“O, New!” she cried, at last, “what a wicked, wicked wife, you have!”

“Wicked!” he repeated, a little surprised at the term, yet with a world of tenderness in his voice, “Not that, Pink, dear; not that. I won’t let anybody say that—not even you.”

“But I am,” she declared, gaining courage from his contradiction, “I am—I’m not the least bit worthy of you. I wonder you have put up with me as long as you have. I wonder you haven’t gone off and left me, and——”

“And what, darling?”

“I was going to say, taken another and nicer and better and more reasonable and trusting wife—but, no, I won’t say that, because—O, New, dearest, I can’t bear even to imagine losing you.”

Yorke fancied that he must be dreaming. Of course he was dreaming. What a fool he was to

think this was all real! He remembered that he had come in tired and worried, with his wife on his mind, and had lain down there in the dark, and had gone to sleep, and this was all a fabric of old Morpheus, whom he had known to play similar tricks many a time. He pinched himself hard—very hard, cruelly, until he could have cried out with pain, and then he laughed a little in his sleeve that he should have thought that the pinching was real. That was a dream too, of course, and a dream-pinch would never awaken anybody. It was a very pleasant dream that he had endeavored to arouse himself from, and if it was pleasant, why need he try to end it? Katherine was repentant. He would hear what she had to repent of. It was doubtless some outrageous thing, fashioned of his own disordered imagination. And then he heard her saying :

“Alan has been here, dear ; and he has told me everything. Can you ever forgive me, do you think, for having so misjudged you ?”

She was speaking very calmly now. Her tears had ceased. The dark had given her courage. One can say things in the dark, that the light would stifle.

There was certainly nothing outrageous in this statement. It seemed very probable—very real.

“O, why didn’t you tell me, yourself?” she pleaded. “Do you know I blame you a little for not having told me?” Though—but, of course, you were in honor bound not to!”

He caught her in his arms, ravenously, and drew her face down and kissed it.

“It is not a dream, then,” he cried, excitedly. “Do you know, Pink, I feared it was! And Alan has been here, has he? And he told you the whole story? Alan is a good fellow, and I regret nothing I have done for him. He has repaid me a thousandfold.”

He held her close to him, and kissed her again and again; and then she fell to weeping once more for joy. And, after a while, they both got up, with their arms still about each other, and Yorke lit the light, and they stood looking into each others’ glad faces, until they actually laughed aloud at their own sentimentalism; and then they looked about the room, in an embarrassed way, and Katherine’s eyes fell upon an unopened envelope lying upon the floor.

“What is that?” she asked.

“I’m sure I don’t know,” her husband an-

swered, picking it up, "I brought it up from down stairs. An invitation to something, I fancy." He handed it to her and she opened it, hastily.

"O, New!" she cried, when once her gaze rested upon the enclosed card, "what do you think it is?"

"I'm sure I don't know."

"It's the *Assembly book*," she declared, delightedly. "We've actually got it."

"Then there's nothing more in Philadelphia for us to gain," he replied, pleased at her joy.

"Nothing!"

"Of course we can't go, though," he went on, "you being in mourning——"

"O, no, we can't go," she interrupted hurriedly. "Let me see. The first is January 10. By that time, dear, we shall be in mid-Atlantic."


"We?" he repeated, questioningly.

"Certainly, *we*," she replied, as if no other plan had ever entered her mind. "I shouldn't think of going, without you."

THE END.

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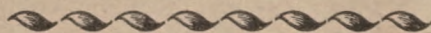
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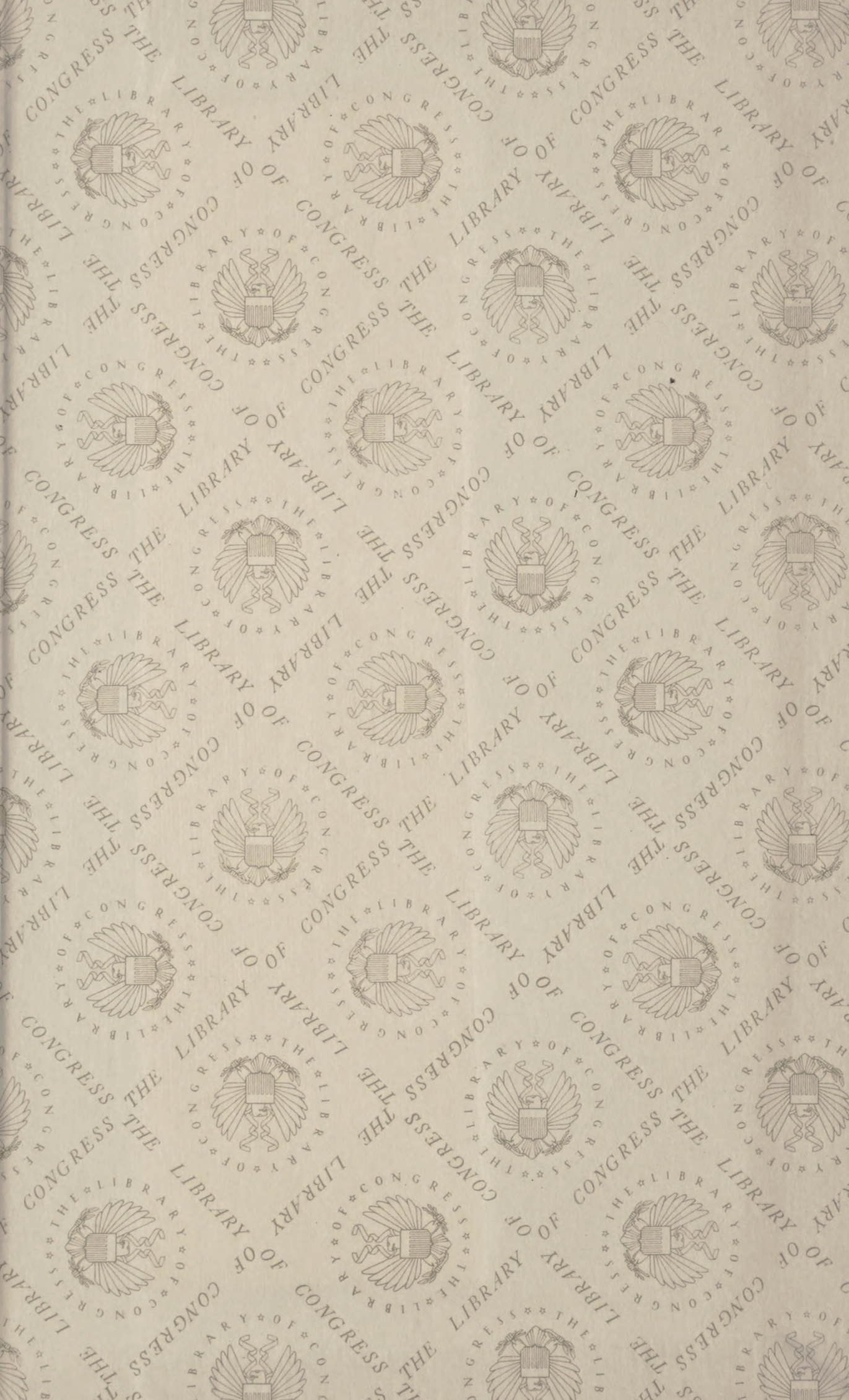
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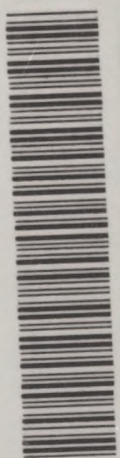
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